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ABSTRACT

This booklet is part of a series designed to help students take and defend a position on public issues. This unit examines the topic of immigration. Lessons encourage students to engage in discussions that touch on ethical, definitional, and factual questions alike. The first unit, "The Immigrant Experience," presents the stories of people who decided to leave their homelands and come to the United States. As the narratives reveal, many came to find work and the children they brought with them adapted to their new surroundings. A unit entitled "Immigration Restrictions" focuses upon U.S. immigration policy up to the year 1924, the division of families that sometimes resulted from immigration quotas, and the role of race and nationality in policies that measured the worth of immigrants. "Today's Issues" is the title of a unit that describes more recent immigration policy and presents analogies of past and present immigration concerns. Each section concludes with "Persisting Questions of History," a set of issues for discussion. The document ends with "Review, Reflection, and Research," a further set of activities that aim at deeper analysis and fuller discussion of viewpoints. The accompanying teacher's guide begins with introductory material and then follows with questions that underlie the issues which the student readings address and explains that these readings deal with ethical definitional and factual issues alike. In "Teaching the Unit," instructors receive advice on preparing to present the material and introducing it to students. The guide then offers tips on the individual topics about which students read. A bibliography and student handouts conclude the guide. (SG)

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Pluralism and National Identity

Public Issues Series
Social Science Education Consortium

2

Public Issues Series

IMMIGRATION: PLURALISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Adapted from the Harvard Social Studies Project
by Mary Elizabeth Glade and James R. Giese
under the direction of
Donald W. Oliver and Fred M. Newmann

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What Is the Public Issues Series?

The Public Issues Series is a collection of units designed to help you take and defend a position on public issues. A public issue is a question involving a choice or decision over which there is disagreement. Public issues can be questions to be answered by all the citizens of a nation or community or by officials acting for them:

- Should school newspapers have the same right to freedom of the press as other newspapers?
- Should the United States provide aid to rebels in Communist nations in Latin America?

Public issues can also be phrased as choices for personal action:

- Should I write a letter to the principal to protest censorship?
- Should I send money to a group pressing for government funding for rebels in Communist nations in Latin America?

You might ask why this unit looks at the history of immigration rather than concentrating just on current immigration issues. By looking at how decisions were made in the past, we can see that history did not have to happen just the way it did. History is not simply a rushing stream of political, economic, and social events. The decisions people make shape history. In addition, many of the problems people face persist across time and place. By looking at how these conflicts were resolved in other times and places, we can clarify our positions on how they ought to be resolved here and now.

This unit, like others in the Public Issues Series, involves you as much more than a reader of history. Instead, you will be a thinking participant in the past, the present, and even the future.

What Are the Central Issues of This Unit?

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..." This verse, inscribed on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor, contains more than noble words. It symbolizes how Americans and others have viewed the United States for more than 200 years.

"America! ... shores of the Old World, these words built dreams in the minds of millions throughout 19th-century Europe.

Such dreams provided relief from murderous famines, crushing poverty, and religious and political oppression. These same problems – and hopes for a better life – have stimulated 20th-century migration from Latin America, Asia, and the Pacific Islands.

The arrival of immigrants tested the hopes and fears of both older Americans and the new arrivals. Older residents resented and discriminated against later immigrants. New arrivals found themselves pushed into slums, which in time became ghettos. As early as 1882, Congress began setting limits on immigration from certain nations. Today, population pressure, economic problems, and conflict among ethnic groups have prompted Americans once more to raise serious questions about American immigration policy. These questions – the critical issues of this unit – are:

- What has motivated people to pull up roots and undertake a potentially hazardous journey to a place that may – or may not – be more hospitable? Why have so many migrants chosen the United States as a destination?
- Are immigrants and their descendants treated unfairly or hampered by discrimination? Who is responsible for dealing with such problems?
- What is an American? Have some groups been viewed as more "American" than others? Can immigrants strike a balance between their traditions and the "American Way"?
- Should the United States still be a refuge for the oppressed? Do we still see ourselves as a nation of immigrants? What should our immigration policy be?

In this unit, you will seek answers to these questions by thinking about cases that authentically represent several stages in U.S. history. Your answers – there are no "right" or "wrong" ones – will help you evaluate the significance of being, in Walt Whitman's words, a "nation of nations."

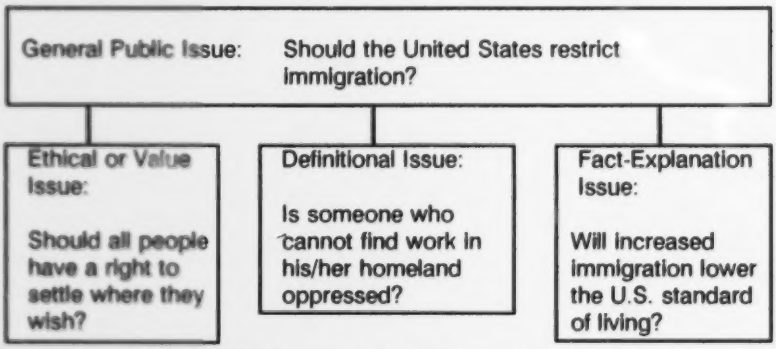
How Will We Approach the Issues in This Unit?

In this unit, you will take part in many discussions. Remember that not every discussion will resolve disagreements. It is often just as useful for people to learn to state their ideas with more precision and clarity and to discover precisely how their ideas differ from those of others.

Any discussion can become bogged down by disagreements. Learning to identify the kinds of questions being raised can help keep the discussion moving. In discussing public issues, people generally look at three kinds of questions:

- Ethical or value questions. These questions deal with judgments about what should or ought to be done – judgments about rightness and wrongness.
- Questions of definition. These questions revolve around the meaning of important words or phrases, like *discrimination* or *illegal alien*.
- Questions involving facts and explanations. These questions focus on disagreements about the descriptions or explanations of events.

Examples of each kind of question are given in the diagram below.


General Public Issue: Should the United States restrict immigration?
Ethical or Value Issue: Should all people have a right to settle where they wish?
Definitional Issue: Is someone who cannot find work in his/her homeland oppressed?
Fact-Explanation Issue: Will increased immigration lower the U.S. standard of living?

You may be starting to see that dealing with public issues involves thinking on several levels at the same time:

- Thinking about the controversial topic at hand.
- Thinking about the process of clarifying the topic by identifying the kinds of questions being raised and using strategies for dealing with them.
- Thinking about the feelings and relationships we develop toward others in the conversation and how we can deal constructively with these feelings.

Remember that the reason for discussing a public issue is not to "win" the argument but to understand more clearly your own views and the reasons that support them, as well as differing opinions.

Going to America: A Matter of Change and Choice

Between 1820 and 1986, nearly 50 million people migrated to the United States. Americans have tended to view these immigrants in one of two ways: as heroes and heroines who bravely overcame numerous obstacles to reach what they knew would be a better home in America or as "tempest-tossed" wretches expelled from their homelands by forces beyond their control.

Work of historians in the past 20 years, however, shows that this romanticized view is vastly oversimplified. Historians have begun to realize that the story of immigration is actually the story of 50 million individual decisions to move to the United States and untold millions of other decisions not to do so. While outside forces certainly played a role in many decisions, most immigrants had some options from which to choose. And most realized that coming to the United States would involve hardships.

The stories below describe people who decided to leave their homelands and come to the United States. As you read the stories, look for the reasons underlying each decision. Can you group the immigrants according to their reasons for moving?

Mary Antin

Mary Antin was born in Russia in 1881. She lived in what was known as the Pale of Jewish Settlement (where Jews could live in Russia was restricted at the time). Mary's father failed in several businesses and then tried his luck in another part of Russia, spending nearly three years away from his family. When Mary's mother inherited a business, her father returned to the Pale. Illness and other problems soon led to the failure of this business. The following excerpt from Mary's autobiography (published when she was 30) describes what happened next.

* * * * *

For some years after they got upon their feet again, my parents struggled to regain their place in the business world, but failed to do so. My father had another period of experimenting with this or that business, like his earlier experience. But everything went wrong, til at last he made

---

From Mary Antin, The Promised Land (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1912).

a great resolve to begin life all over again. And the way to do that was to start on a new soil. My father determined to emigrate to America...

Just at this time occurred one of the periodic anti-Semitic movements whereby government officials were wont to clear the forbidden cities of Jews, whom, in the intervals of slack administration of the law, they allowed to maintain an illegal residence in places outside the Pale... It was a little before Passover that the cry of the hunted filled the Jewish world with the familiar fear. The wholesale expulsion of Jews from Moscow and its surrounding district at cruelly short notice was the name of this latest disaster...And hundreds of fugitives, preceded by a wall of distress, flocked into the [Pale]....

The open cities becoming thus suddenly crowded, every man's chance of making a living was diminished in proportion to the number of additional competitors.

...'Next year—in America!' So there was our promised land...My father was carried away by the westward movement, glad of his own deliverance, but sore at heart for us whom he left behind. We were so far reduced in circumstances that he had to travel with borrowed money to a German port, whence he was forwarded to Boston, with a host of others, at the expense of an emigrant aid society.

I was about ten years old when my father emigrated. I was used to his going away from home, and "America" did not mean much more to me than "Kherson," or "Odessa," or any other names of distant places...[but] I know the day when "America" as a world entirely unlike Polotzk lodged in my brain, to become the center of all my dreams and speculations. Well I know the day. I was in bed, sharing the measles with some of the other children. Mother brought us a thick letter from father written just before boarding the ship. The letter was full of excitement... There was an elation, a hint of triumph, such as had never been in my father's letters before. I cannot tell how I knew it....My father was inspired by a vision. He saw something—he promised us something. It was this "America." And "America" became my dream.

I am sure I made as serious efforts as anybody to prepare myself for life in America on the lines indicated in my father's letters. In America, he wrote, it was no disgrace to work at a trade. Workmen and capitalists were equal. The employer addressed the employee as *you*, not, familiarly, as *thou*. The cobbler and the teacher had the same title, "Mister." And all the children, boys and girls, Jews and Gentiles, went to school!

Questions for Conversation

1. What was the primary reason Mary's family emigrated? What factors in Russia contributed to the decision?

2. What were Mary's expectations regarding life in the United States? How might these expectations have contributed to the family's decision?

An Irish Girl

The following story was told to writer Hamilton Holt by an unnamed Irish girl. Although the record does not tell exactly when she emigrated, the potato famine she mentions occurred from 1846 to 1851.

* * * * *

"...But about me – I was born near to Limavaddy; it's a pretty town close to Londonderry. We lived in a peat cabin, but it had a good thatched roof....

There were seven children of us. John and Matthew, they went to Australia. Mother was layin' by [saving] for five years to get their passage money... My mother sent Joseph to Londonderry to learn the weaver's trade.

My father he never was a steady worker... My mother and me and Tilly, we worked in the field for Squire Varney. Yes, plowing and seeding and digging – any farm work he'd give us. We did men's work, but we didn't get men's pay. Pay was very small and the twins – that was Maria and Philip – they were too young to work at all. What did we eat? Well, just potatoes. On Sundays, once a month, we'd maybe have a bit of flitch [salt port]. When the potatoes rotted – that was the hard times. Oh, yes, I...[remember] the famine years. And the cornmeal that the Americans sent.

Maria – she was one of the twins – she died [during] the famine years of the typhus and – well, she sickened of the herbs and roots we ate – we had no potatoes.

From "The Life Story of an Irish Cook," in Hamilton Holt, ed., The Life Stories of Undistinguished Americans as Told by Themselves (New York: James Pott and Company, 1906), pp. 143-145.

[Her sister Tilly went first to Philadelphia and got a job there as a housekeeper.] She had no expenses and laid by money enough to bring me out before the year was gone... The passage was $12. You brought your own eating, your tea and meal, and most had flitch. There was two big stoves we cooked on. The steerage was a dirty place and we were eight weeks on the voyage [three weeks over schedule]...

Questions for Conversation

1. In what ways were the motivations of the Irish girl and Mary Antin similar or different? How were conditions in their homelands similar or different?

2. Both women and their families had seemingly exhausted every possibility and were nearly wiped out before they immigrated to America. How might this affect their decision-making? Think about effects on options available and willingness to face a hazardous journey.

Polish Workers

In the 18th century, Poland was divided, with Poles living under the rule of Prussia, Austria, and Russia. The years between 1900 and 1918, when the nation regained its independence, were peak years for immigration from Poland to the United States. The excerpts that follow were taken from letters written by or to Polish immigrants during that period.

* * * * *

To Wojtu Krupa from his sister Stanislawa, June 3, 1913

"DEAR LITTLE BROTHER:...I am very glad that you are healthy and that you succeed well, for, as I see from your letter, God the Merciful does not desert you, and though you must work heavily the fruits of your labor are to be seen. And the work did not make you a light-headed man nor a spendthrift, for when one has to work hard for his money he learns better how to manage it...You don't act as other emigrants, our acquaintances, do, but on the contrary, you remember your fatherland,...And then, dear brother, you remember about your parents and send them money, for perhaps now they need it, and when you return they will give

From William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, The Polish Peasant in Europe and America, vol. 1 (New York: Dover Publications, 1958 edition), pp. 771-772, pp. 1022-1023.

it back with interest. I heard something like this, that you intend to remain in America, but I don't believe it, for what would then be the use of sending money home? And moreover should you not long for your country, would it not be hard to work during your whole life and never to breathe any more the free air of your fatherland?...

Save, dear brother, as soon and as much money as you can; then come back and we will go to Lithuania and buy land here, for there is land enough and cheap—no more than 150 gulden a morg [acre]...in our own district, the land is expensive and there is very little of it....

* * * * *

To Walcia Roczkowski from her betrothed, Teofil Wolski (in Philadelphia), April 8, 1907

...DEAR WALCIA: And now I write you, my dear, an answer to your letter. Some things in this letter are good, and some things of little worth, because of this: If you come to your brother [in America], I will come and get you and we could marry, remain for some years and return with something [some money] to our country, so that later we might not be obliged to earn [as hired laborers]. If I should return [to Poland] in the autumn I should not have much. It was only during the holidays that I sent back the money for the ship-ticket, and by autumn I shall have about 200 roubles. The journey [will cost] 100, the remainder for the wedding, and what then? Go again to America? That is no business for me, to work and to throw to the winds. Therefore I write to you the exact truth: If you don't come and don't wait for me longer it means that you will not be mine, because I won't return sooner than perhaps on the next holiday of Easter; by no means can I sooner. And you write that you will wait only till autumn, and so the one disagrees with the other. Therefore, I request you, answer me, what will become of us, whether you will come or not, or perhaps you will wait a year still.

Questions for Conversation

1. Based on the evidence in the letters, what was the primary reason Polish workers came to the United States? In what ways might this motive influence adjustment to American life?

2. Can you think of any current immigrant groups that come to the United States for the reason you identified in question 1? Does their adjustment to American life support the answer you gave above?

French-Canadian Immigrants in Massachusetts

The excerpt below was taken from an 1881 report written by a well-respected labor statistician, Carrol Wright. The report's biased view of French Canadians was widely criticized; in 1882, Wright wrote a somewhat modified report about this immigrant group. As you read the excerpt, note the comparison Wright made between the French Canadians and Chinese.

* * * * *

With some exceptions the Canadian French are the Chinese of the Eastern States. They care nothing for our institutions, civil, political, or educational. They do not come to make a home among us, to dwell with us as citizens, and so become a part of us; but their purpose is merely to sojourn a few years as aliens, touching us only at a single point, that of work, and, when they have gathered out of us what will satisfy their ends, to get them away to whence they came, and bestow it there. They are a horde of industrial invaders, not a stream of stable settlers. Voting, with all that it implies, they care nothing about. Rarely does one of them become naturalized. They will not send their children to school if they can help it, but endeavor to crowd them into the mills at the earliest possible age....

These people have one good trait. They are [untiring] workers, and docile....To earn all they can by no matter how many hours of toil, to live in the most beggarly way so that out of their earnings they may spend as little for living as possible, and to carry out of the country what they can thus save: this is the aim of the Canadian French in our factory districts.

Questions for Conversation

1. According to Wright, what was the primary reason French Canadians came to the United States? How did Wright think that motive influenced their adjustment to American life? Do you think his reasoning was correct? Why or why not?

2. Many Chinese immigrants came to the western United States to work, hoping to return home later. Do you think they faced stereotypes, as the French Canadians did? Try to find out if your inference is correct.

From the Annual Report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics, No. 12 (1881), pp. 469-470.

German Emigrants

The following is from a British magazine published in 1846. It describes reasons why Germans emigrated in the 1840s.

* * * * *

The dread of destitution [fear of poverty] is a motive to emigrate in Germany, as in England; but not a principal motive. This is clear from the fact that the emigration does not take place in those districts where there is most want. In Westphalia, for instance, a great number of small proprietors have lately sold their lands, and sailed to America – each of whom, it is reckoned, has taken with him at least thirty pounds worth of goods and money....

The one great cause of this almost national movement is the desire for absolute political and religious freedom, the absence of all restrictions upon the development of society; and the publication of opinions which cannot be realized at home...Another motive has been the great success of some of the earlier settlers....

Questions for Conversation

1. Based on this reading, how were German immigrants different from the others you have read about in this section?

2. Which of these groups do you think would adjust to a new land more easily? Explain your answer.

- Those forced to leave their homes because of poverty.
- Those who chose to leave to gain greater freedom.

Persisting Questions of History

Defining Refugees, Migrant Workers, and Stable Movers. Some historians have classified immigrants as refugees, migrant workers, and stable movers. Develop a definition for each category. Then place the groups or individuals you read about in this section in the correct categories. What categories do recent immigrants to the United States fit? Give evidence to support your hypothesis?

From Chamber's Edinburg Journal, vol. 5 (June 13, 1846), pp. 387-389.

Analyzing an Explanation. Historian Alan Kraut has written about immigrants who decided to leave their homelands. Read the excerpt from Kraut's work and decide whether readings in this section support or contradict Kraut's statement. What other evidence might help you support your position?

> ...The immigrant might not always be the sole arbiter of his or her own fate, but neither was the immigrant primarily a passive soul, reactive and compliant before impersonal social forces. Weak and beaten men and women do not undertake transoceanic journeys to far-off lands unless they are herded aboard ship at gunpoint.
>
> Wise in the world's ways, most immigrants knew that there was a price tag attached to every decision, even if the cost was for the moment indecipherable. And for many people, the price of emigration was too high compared with that of other options.

Comparing and Contrasting Explanations Through Analogy. In the early 1980s, a new group of immigrants arrived in the United States. These descendants of the Mayan Indians had lived in remote jungle villages in Central America. Their villages were attacked by the Guatemalan government, which feared that the Indians were subversives. Entire villages were destroyed. *Miami Herald* reporter Angie Cannon wrote of the refugees:

> They had not come because of the wealth or the freedom they'd heard they could find in the Colossus to the north. They came simply because there was terror at their backs, and once they began walking out of the jungle, they could not turn around.

Does Cannon suggest that the Mayan refugees did or did not have a choice? Do you agree with her? Why or why not?

The Job

Once immigrants had come to the United States, they faced other decisions as well—where in the United States to settle and what kind of work to seek. Some immigrants had fewer options than others. How much money they had on arrival, whether their job skills were in demand, whether they had friends or relatives to ease their adjustment, all played a part in the immigrants' range of choices.

Not all immigrants were able to find employment in the trade they had practiced in their homeland. Some, unable to find steady employment, worked as peddlers, in tenement sweatshops, and in jobs native-born Americans would not take.

Each of the readings below describes an immigrant experience with jobs. As you read these experiences, think about why immigrants had the jobs described. Notice also any details of where and how immigrants lived. Try to decide whether you believe the immigrants were treated unfairly and, if so, who was responsible.

Working in New York

Anzia Yezierska was a Russian Jewish immigrant to New York City. She wrote an autobiographical novel in 1925. In the following excerpt, the heroine, Sara, has left her father's home in a small town to the south and come to New York City to go to school to become a teacher. She expected help from her two married sisters, but found them in dire straits. Sara finds a room of her own to rent and now must find a job to feed herself and pay the rent while she goes to night school.

* * * * *

The first thing when I opened my eyes, I counted out the money I had left in my little knot. Only three dollars and sixty-five cents between me and hunger. A job. And I must get it at once.

It was slack season in the factories. I walked the streets, wondering where to turn for work, when I passed a laundry. A big printed sign was in the window: "Ironer wanted."

From Anzia Yezierska, Bread Givers. © 1925 by Doubleday, © renewed 1952 by Anzia Yezierska, transferred to Louise Levitas Henriksen in 1970. Published by Persea Books; reprinted by permission of the publisher.

As I opened the door, a blinding wave of heat struck my face. The air was full of the sweaty smell of washing clothes. At the back, girls could scarcely be seen through the clouds of steam. Hair was sticking to their faces. Necks streamed with sweat.

A huge, bulgy-faced man sat at the counter, marking collars.

"Do you need an ironer?" I asked.

He looked at me from his big height till I felt like a speck of dust under his feet. With a grunt, he went on marking the laundry.

I put my courage into my teeth and faced him. "You got a sign out, 'Ironer wanted.'"

"Yes, but not you," he growled. "I want someone who can swing an iron." And he pointed with his thumb to a husky German woman with giant, red arms, who ironed a white dress with big, steady strokes. "That's the kind I need for an ironer."

"But let me only show you how good I can iron," I begged. "I was quicker than the big ones in my shop."

He tried me with an iron at an empty board with a small lot. But though I put all my strength into it, I was so nervous with him watching me, I thought the job was lost. But the man nodded kindly as I handed him the ironed apron. "You got guts all right," he chuckled. "I'll start you at the mangle for five a week, and later I'll break you into an ironer."

By the evening, I was so tired that I walked into the Grand Street Cafeteria for something to eat. I had read about the place in the paper. Kind, rich ladies had opened it for working girls, to have their meals in beautiful surroundings and cheap.

It was good to see flowers on the table. And the clean, educated face of the lady manager who sat by the desk. I needed something beautiful to look at after that hard day in the laundry. The portions were a little skimpy. But the white curtains and the clean, restful place lifted me with longing for the higher life.

Great dreams spurred my feet on my way to night school.

"What do you want to learn?" asked the teacher at the desk.

"I want to learn everything in the school from the beginning to the end."

She raised the lids of her cold eyes and stared at me. "Perhaps you had better take one thing at a time," she said, indifferently. "There's a commercial course, manual training---"

"I want a quick education for a teacher," I cried.

A hard laugh was my answer. Then she showed me the lists of the different classes, and I came out of my high dreams by registering for English and arithmetic.

Then I began five nights a week in a crowded class of fifty, with a teacher so busy with her class that she had not time to notice me.

The first morning in my room, I awoke very early. My head was clear, and I looked with full eyes on the thick dirt that I had grabbed in such anxious haste. There were only a few rusty nails on the door for my clothes. The table was shaky and the one chair was patched with boards.

Against the heart-choking dinginess flashed [my sister] Mashah's shining little palace. Her place was once worse than this, and she polished it up. Why can't I? A pot of paint, a little white oilcloth with brass tacks, a scrubbing brush with soap. But first of all, I thought, if only I could wash away the mud of ages from that window, it would make it lighter in the room.

When my landlady saw me start on my cleaning, she cried warningly: "I never washed the windows since I lived here, not even for the holidays, because the upstairs tenants—a black year on them—are always throwing down things. Their hands should only fall to their sides."

But I wouldn't listen to her, and began to wash the window. The minute I stuck my head out, a bunch of potato peelings fell on me. I shook off the peelings and went on with the washing. Someone began shaking a carpet. Then a shower of ashes blinded me.

I sank on the bed, all the strength out of my arms and fingers. The deadening dirt! How could I ever do anything in this airless gloom?...

The sound of the factory whistle brought me to my feet. Already seven o'clock. My fussing over the window made it too late for me to start cooking my coffee for breakfast. I grabbed a slice of black bread and ate as I hurried to the car...Ten hours I must work in the laundry. Two hours in the night school. Two hours more to study my lessons. When can I take time to be clean? If I'm to have strength and courage to go on with what I set out to do, I must shut my eyes to the dirt.

That evening, after night school, I spread my books out on my table and began to hammer into my thick head the difference between a noun, a verb, and a preposition... The more I repeated the definitions the more mixed up I got. It was all words, words, about words.

Maybe it was the terrible racket that was muddling my brain. Phonographs and pianolas blared against each other. Voices gossiping and jabbering across the windows. Wailing children. The yowling shrieks of two alley cats. The shrill bark of a hungry pup...

Then I clasped my hands over my head and began talking to myself: "Stop all this sensitiveness, or you're beaten already before the fight is begun... You've got to study. As you had to shut your eyes to dirt, so you must shut your ears to the noise."...

By the whole force of my will I could reason myself out of the dirt and noise around me. But how could I reason with my hungry stomach. How could I stretch my five dollars a week to meet my needs?...

One day in the laundry, while busy ironing a shirt, the thought of Mother's cooking came over me. Why was it that Mother's simplest dishes, her plain potato soup, her *gefulte* fish, were so filling? And what was the matter with the cafeteria food that it left me hungrier after eating then [sic] before?

For a moment I imagined myself eating Mother's *gefulte* fish. A happy memory floated over me. A feast I was having. What a melting taste in the mouth!

"Hey – there!" cried the boss, rushing madly at me.

"Oi weh! Oi weh!" Smoke was rising from under my iron.

"Oh, I'll wash it out," I gasped in fright, as I lifted the iron and saw the scorched triangle.

But the boss snatched the shirt away from me. "Three dollars out of your wages for this," he raged.

Not a word could I say. Either it was to lose my job or pay. And I could not lose my job.

Three dollars out from my wages, when every fraction of a penny was counted out where it had to go. Maybe for weeks I'd have to live on dry bread to make up the loss.

Questions for Conversation

1. Was Sara treated fairly by her boss? her landlady? her teacher at night school?

2. Describe the conditions in which Sara lived. How did these conditions affect her ability to do well in school and on the job? Can you think of examples from your own experience in which living conditions have affected work or school?

Working on the Railroad

Chinese immigration to the west coast of the United States began well before 1849 when gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in California. After that date, hundreds more Chinese laborers and merchants emigrated to the gold fields and later the railroad camps. Here is a portion of the testimony of Charles Crocker, a railroad contractor, before the Joint Congressional Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration in the Fall of 1876.

* * * * *

By Mr. Bee [A representative of one of six companies employing Chinese labor]:

Question. How long have you been in this State? – Answer. I have been here twenty-six years.

Q. What has been your business? – A. For the last fifteen or sixteen years I have been building railroads.

Q. Did you commence the construction of the Central Pacific with Chinese or white labor? – A. We commenced with white labor.

Q. How long did you continue it? – A. We never discontinued it; we have always employed white labor.

Q. I mean how long did you continue with that kind of labor extensively? – A. We continued about a year and a half, when we found we could not get sufficient labor to progress with the road as fast as was necessary, and we felt driven to the expedience of trying Chinese labor. I believe that all our people were prejudiced against Chinese labor, and that there was a disposition not to employ them.

Q. You mean that the railroad people were prejudiced? – A. Yes, sir; especially Mr. Strobridge and myself, who had charge of the construction more particularly. I had charge of the construction and Mr. Strobridge was under me as superintendent. He thought that Chinese labor would not answer...he did not think they were fit laborers; he did not think they would build a railroad. We advertised very thoroughly and

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From U.S. Senate, Report of the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration, 44th Congress, Second Session, Report 689 (1877).

sent circulars to every post-office in the State inviting white labor, and offering large prices for that class of labor, but we failed to get over 800 men. Our force, I think, never went much above 800 white laborers with the shovel and the pick, and after pay-day it would run down to six or seven hundred....Then we were compelled to try Chinese labor, and we tried them on the light work, thinking they would not do for heavy work. Gradually we found that they worked well there, and as our forces spread out and we began to occupy more ground and felt more in a hurry, we put them into the softer cuts, and finally into the rock cuts. Wherever we put them we found them good, and they worked themselves into our favor to such an extent that if we found we were in a hurry for a job of work, it was better to put Chinese on at once....They are very trusty, they are very intelligent, and they live up to their contracts.

Q. As to their social, moral, and financial effect upon this coast I wish you to be elaborate in giving your views to the commission, as you have had great experience that way. How as to their advancement of this State or otherwise? – A. I think that the presence of the Chinese as laborers among us goes very far toward the material interest of the country; that without their labor we would be thrown back in all branches of industry, farming, mining, reclaiming lands, and everything else. I believe that the effect of Chinese labor upon white labor has an elevating instead of a degrading tendency. I think that every white laborer who is intelligent and able to work, who is more than a digger in a ditch, or a man with a pick and a shovel, who has the capacity of being something

else, can get to be something else by the presence of Chinese labor easier than he could without it....I know of a great many instances where men have come on to the road and taken a foremanship over Chinamen, and have acquired a little start which they afterward used, and they are now independent citizens, owners of farms, owners of corner groceries and stores in the country towns, &c....I believe, to-day, if the Chinese labor was driven out of this State, if there are 75,000 Chinese laborers here to-day, there are 75,000 white laborers who would have to come down from the elevated classes of labor they are now engaged in and take the place of these Chinamen, and therefore it would degrade white labor instead of elevating it....

By Senator Sargent:

Q. What was the occasion [of a strike in which Chinese workers did not come out for work]—a strike for higher wages?—A. Yes, sir... If there had been that number of white laborers on that work in a strike there would have been murder and drunkenness and disorder of all kinds; it would have been impossible to have controlled them; but this strike of the Chinese was just like Sunday all along the work. These men staid in their camps; that is, they would come out and walk around, but not a word was said, nothing was done; no violence was perpetrated along the whole line. I stopped the provisions on them, stopped the butchers from butchering, and used such coercive measures. I then went up there and made them a little war speech and told them they could not control the work, that no one made laws there but me. I talked to them so that they could comprehend what the rules and regulations were, and that if they did not choose to obey they could go away from the work, but under no circumstances would I give way to them. I gave them until the next Monday morning at six o'clock to come back, and told them that every man who went to work then should be forgiven for the week's strike, but that all others should be fined. ...They well understood what fining meant for the week's idleness, and on Monday morning at six o'clock...they returned peaceably to work.

Questions for Conversation

1. Mr. Crocker admitted to prejudice before hiring Chinese workers. Did his prejudice change after he worked with them? What might this suggest about how immigrants are treated in the United States?

2. Did Mr. Crocker view Chinese labor as a threat or a help to native-born workers? What reasoning did he use to support his view? How could you challenge his explanation?

Working in the Steel Mills

A 1914 volume, entitled Wage-Earning Pittsburgh, contained a chapter on "Wage-Earning Immigrants." In the excerpt below, the author of that report describes the experience of Slavs in the steel mills.

* * * * *

This [the lowest industrial stratum] is the level at which they enter the economic order. What trade equipment do they bring into the work with them? Their industrial efficiency is low and I should estimate that 95 per cent have no knowledge of modern machinery or methods of modern production; they are children in factory training. Further, those who have trades find themselves in an industrial environment where their previous training is of little value. They are ignorant of the English language, and the few mechanics and tradesmen among them because of this ignorance can do no better than join the ranks of the common laborers. We must bear in mind, however, that those who know how to use tools, once they are put to work that requires some skill adapt themselves quickly to it. Hence we meet not a few Slavs and Lithuanians who do work of a semi-skilled nature; nor does the exceptional man stop there. Sons, also, of men of these nationalities who settled in the city a generation ago have risen to positions of standing in the industries. It is not unusual to hear of this man or that who has become a foreman in the mills or taken a place in business or in the professions.

...It is a common opinion in the District that some employers of labor give the Slavs and Italians preference over English-speaking applicants because of their docility, their habit of silent submission, their amenability to do without a murmur. These foreigners as a rule earn the lowest wages and work the full stint of hours; in the machine shops they work sixty hours a week; at the blast furnaces twelve hours a day for seven days in the week with a twenty-four-hour turn every fortnight. The common laborer in and around the mills works nominally a ten-hour day, but overtime is the rule rather than the exception when trade is good. The unit of wages is an hour rate for day labor, and a Slav is willing to take the longer hours (twelve on the farms in the fatherland). In 1907 possibly 60 to 70 per cent of the laborers in the mills came out Sundays for the purpose of clearing the yards and repairing....

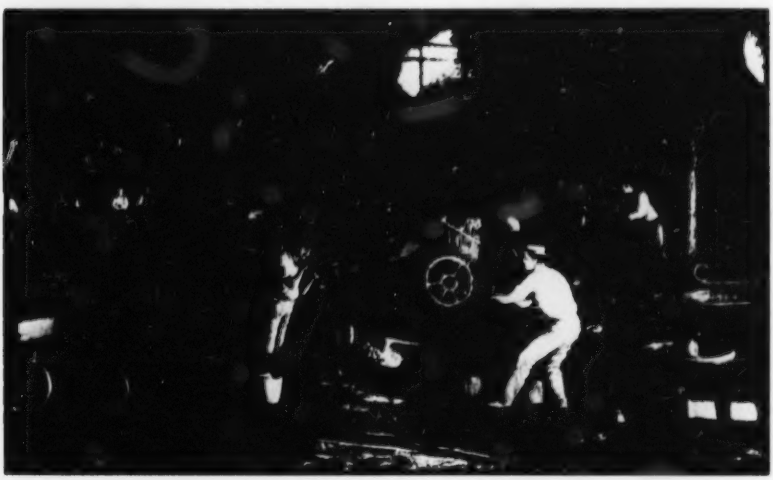
From Paul Underwood Kellogg, ed., The Pittsburgh Survey: Wage-Earning Pittsburgh, Volume VI (New York: Survey Associates, 1914), pp. 38-44.

My belief is that certain employers of labor have reaped advantage from racial antipathies. For instance, the Pole and the Lithuanian have nothing in common and each of them despises the Slovak. Superintendents know this and use their knowledge when foreigners are likely to reach a common understanding upon wages or conditions of labor. These considerations have helped make it less difficult for factory operators to keep open shop and non-union shop in Pittsburgh...

...The lowest wage I found Slavs working for was 13 1/2 cents an hour. The wage of common labor in a majority of the steel mills in 1907 was 15 or 16 1/2 cents for a ten- or a twelve-hour day.

But the newcomers know nothing of a standard wage, and when work is scarce they will offer to work for less than is paid for common labor. Such was the case with a band of Croatians who offered their services to a firm in Pittsburgh for $1.20 a day. When the superintendent heard it he said, "My God, what is the country coming to? How can a man live in Pittsburgh for $1.20 a day?" The foreman replied, "Give them rye bread, a herring, and beer, and they are all right..."

More, the Slavs will consciously cut wages in order to get work. A man who knows something about blacksmithing or carpentering will work at a trade for little more than half the standard wage of the District. They count their money in the denominations of the fatherland and estimate its value according to old country standards. Some foremen take advantage of this...



So the Slav gains his foothold in the Pittsburgh industries, and while gaining it he undermines the income of the next higher industrial group and incurs the enmity of the Americans. Shrewd superintendents are known not only to take advantage of the influx of unskilled labor to keep down day wages, but to reduce the pay of skilled men by a gradually enforced system of promoting the Slavs. In the place of six men at $10 a day, one will be employed at $15, with five others at half, or less than half, the old rate, who will work under the high-priced man. Inventions, changes in processes, new machines, a hundred elements tend to complicate the situation and rend it difficult to disentangle the influence of any one element. But this much is clear: the new immigration is a factor which is influencing the economic status of the whole wage-earning population in Pittsburgh...

With this statement of the economic position of the Slavs, we can more intelligently approach the problem of their living conditions. But first let us bear sharply in mind that their work is often cast among dangers; is often inimical to health. Many work in intense heat, the din of machinery, and the noise of escaping steam. The congested condition of most of the plants in Pittsburgh adds to the physical discomforts for an out-of-doors people, while their ignorance of the language and of modern machinery increases the risk. How many of the Slavs, Lithuanians, and Italians were injured in Pittsburgh in one year no one could tell me in 1907. No reliable statistics were compiled....When I mentioned to a priest a plant that had a bad reputation he said, "Oh, that is the slaughter house; they kill them there every day." I quote him not for his accuracy, but to show how rumors circulate and are real to the people themselves. Exaggerated though such hearsay was, the waste in life and limb has for years been great – and so continues – and if it had all fallen upon the native born a cry would have gone up long since which would have stayed the slaughter.

Questions for Conversation

1. How did the author of this report believe immigrants affected jobs for native-born Americans? How is his view different from that of Mr. Crocker?

2. Historians have argued that the presence of many different immigrant groups in factories, mines, and other work places stood in the way of forming labor unions. What evidence can you find in this reading to support or contradict this argument? Can you think of examples from your own experience when someone has taken advantage of the fact that two groups do not get along? Is this fair?

Persisting Questions Of History

Evaluating Sources. Historians deal with a wide variety of sources. In doing so, they must consider the reliability, or accuracy, of each source. In this section, you have read testimony by someone who employed immigrants, an excerpt from an autobiographical novel by an immigrant, and a report by a social scientist. How would you evaluate the reliability of each source? Is a novel less reliable because the author may alter the "facts" to make a point? If a person relies on immigrant labor to make profits in his company, will this influence his testimony to make it less reliable?

To decide how reliable a source is, we can ask such questions as:

- Is this a primary source (one written by a person who witnessed or participated in the event) or a secondary source (one written by someone who did not experience the event firsthand)? If it is a secondary source, where did the author get his/her information? How much time passed between the event and creation of the document?
- Is the author qualified to speak on the topic?
- Does the author provide support for his/her statements?
- Does the author have a reason to distort the information?
- Does other evidence support the author's point of view?

Can you think of any additional questions that would help evaluate the reliability of a source? Choose one of the sources in this section and answer the questions for that source. Based on your answers, how reliable do you think the source is?

Analyzing Arguments. Some politicians and labor leaders argued that the availability of immigrant workers reduced the wages of all American workers. Others claimed that immigrants actually took jobs away from native-born Americans. Yet some people said that immigrant workers made it possible for native-born workers to advance to more skilled jobs quickly. Based on what you have learned, do you think that any of these arguments are reasonable and accurate? Do you think native-born Americans would have been interested in the jobs described in the readings? Can you find evidence related to the jobs immigrants do today that would support your answers?

Determining Responsibility. Conrad Carl, a tailor in New York City, testified about his working conditions before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor in 1883. As you read his testimony, identify the changes he described in his working conditions. Who was responsible for these changes? What could be done to improve conditions?

> During the time I have been here the tailoring business is altered in three different ways. Before we had sewing machines we worked piecework with our wives, and very often our children. We had no trouble then with our neighbors, nor with the landlord, because it was a very still business, very quiet; but in 1854 or 1855, and later, the sewing machine was invented and introduced, and it stitched very nicely, nicer than the tailor could do; and the bosses said: "We want you to use the sewing machine; you have to buy one." Many of the tailors had a few dollars in the bank, and they took the money and bought machines. Many others had no money, but must help themselves; so they brought their stitching, the coat or vest, to the other tailors who had sewing machines, and paid them a few cents for the stitching. Later, when the money was given out for the work, we found out that we could earn no more than we could without the machine; but the money for the machine was gone now, and we found that the machine was only for the profit of the bosses; that they got their work quicker, and it was done nicer... The machine makes too much noise in the place, and the neighbors want to sleep, and we have to stop sewing earlier; so we have to work faster. We work now in excitement – in a hurry.

Try to think of examples from your own experience in which there is pressure to work faster and faster. Two examples might be the shop where you get your hair cut and fast food restaurants. How do workers feel under this kind of pressure? Is a product or service provided more quickly always better? More profitable?

The Children of the Immigrants

You have read accounts of immigrants coming to and settling in this country. These people have children. What becomes of the children and grandchildren of immigrants? How do they fit into the schools? Are they able to get the same jobs as their peers? Are they able to maintain their culture? Do they gain from and/or contribute to the existing culture in America? Here is the story of a second-generation American struggling to solve the problem of holding onto family ties and fitting into American society.

* * * * *

My name is Nichols. It *is*, in a way – John S. Nichols. Legally that is my name; but it wasn't always. My middle initial stands for the name I started with – Sobuchanowsky...

In the old country my father belonged to a little-known nationality – the Lemkoes. These people seem to be concentrated between the San and Poprad rivers. They are a small nation, if they are a nation; perhaps they are just a branch of the Ukrainian people. At least that is what some Ukrainians claim. Most Lemkoes are themselves uncertain whether they are Ukrainians, Russians, or Poles, or merely Lemkoes. My father doesn't know to this day. He doesn't care. Russian, Ukrainian, Pole, or Lemko – it's all the same to him...

When he came to America, he went to Dexter, a soft-coal town in southwestern Pennsylvania, where other Lemkoes, including a cousin of his, had gone to work in the mines. Dad became a miner too.

He was a small, thin man. Back in his native country he had not had very much to eat. He never weighed much over a hundred pounds. He had short bow-legs and long arms and big hands. He was all bone and skin and sinew, disproportionately powerful for his size, and the mine bosses considered him a good worker.

Nobody bothered to remember his surname; they all called him Nick.

Excerpts from What's Your Name?, by Louis Adamic. Copyright 1942 by Louis Adamic. Reprinted by permission of Harper and Row.

Dad and Mother first became interested in each other one Sunday at the home of a fellow countryman in Dexter...Mother, too, was from the Carpathians but had come to America as a girl of twelve. Now she was seventeen. Her father, also a Lemko, was employed in the same mine as Dad and thought him an acceptable son-in-law – he never missed a shift.

They married in 1904. I imagine Mother quickly regretted it. She did not have a good life. She bore seven children in less than eight years. I am the oldest.

Father was what the Scotch-Irish and Welsh bosses in town called "just a Hunky" – all work, work, and more work. But this by no means describes him; the "Americans" never really understood the "Hunkies." A few years ago in a sudden soft moment Dad told me how he had felt when he first saw the Statue of Liberty. "I cry like hell," he said...

Dad liked America from the start even if he never showed it and always looked harried, desperate, and tired. His idea was to work hard, earn as much money as you could and spend no more than you absolutely had to and save the rest. It was an obsession with him. He knew he was face-to-face with a tough proposition. Some of this he had doubtless brought with him from the old country, where poverty was the chief note of peasant existence. The rest he developed here working at a dangerous job below earth and living in a strange country full of baffling phenomena.

Father handled all the money himself, did all the shopping, and even collected from the boarders. Mother never had more than a quarter in the house. Dad made her keep a boardinghouse, and she cooked and washed for a dozen men as well as her own family. Childbearing was incidental, a brief annual interruption of her routine. An interlude. Her life was no joke; at twenty-three or four her looks were gone. Every once in a while she rebelled. There were nasty scenes...

At any rate this went on for eight years. Then Mother fell ill and died. Pneumonia. She was up one day working, yelling at us; dead the next. The last baby was only a few months old. I was barely seven.

Mother's death was a great blow to Dad. He went in back of the culm pile which loomed like a mountain across the tracks from our house, and wept. He roared like a stuck ox. I saw him go and followed him. There he sat on a big piece of slag, holding his head in his hands – and that awful sound coming out of him! I suppose he loved Mother,

maybe so deep-down, so twistedly, so like a peasant, that his real feeling for her came out only now. While she lived, so far as I can recall, he had shown her no consideration, no tenderness. Perhaps now he was sorry...

So now, here was this man, my father, with four young children on his hands. Except for the funeral he was afraid to miss a single day's work. As before, he went off at five-thirty every morning and returned at five-thirty in the afternoon. He worked ten hours a day. There was an hour for lunch and it took him about half an hour to get to the mine.

A young unmarried sister of Mother's came over to do the housekeeping, but she was no match for the situation. One by one the boarders left. Mike and Joe, the two youngest children, cried most of the time. Our young aunt did not know what do do with them. My sister, Annie, next to me in age, was only six. I began to go to school and probably was the most wretched of us all.

Although I was a native American my English was very poor. Nearly all the talk I had heard was Ukrainian or Russian. Only Mother had burst occasionally into English – as if in protest against her predicament. And to Miss Watkins, my first-grade teacher, I was one of "those foreign kids" with an unpronounceable name, a two-legged problem and nuisance. Whenever I happened to come within range of her eyes she grimaced. Most of the time she tried to ignore me along with the other "foreign children." I was afraid of her and, probably more because of this than on account of my poor English, understood almost nothing she said. Sometimes it was all I could do to keep from breaking into tears in the middle of a lesson. Also, my clothes were worse than the other children's. They were crude and too big. Dad bought everything we wore without taking us along. He went on the theory that size was unimportant. Suppose they were too large! We would grow. I remember my shoes were always much too big no matter how tightly I laced them...

We were embarrassed, too, over the huge sandwiches Dad made for us to take to school. they were the same size as the ones he put into his own lunch-bucket: a quarter-of-an-inch-thick piece of baloney between two large slices of bread. He put the sandwiches – one apiece – in a paper bag for us, and my sister Annie and I used to hide them....

The sandwiches which the "American" children ate were small and neat, and each youngster had two or three wrapped separately in paper. They were ham, cheese, egg, and beef sandwiches, not just baloney.

Sometimes the crust was cut away around the bread, which was also buttered or smeared with "that green-yellow stuff," as Annie and I used to call mustard before we knew what it was.

The "American" children had cakes, cookies, apples, bananas, and oranges. Dad did not believe in any such fancy food. To him food was to fill the stomach, to keep you in strength, and you could accomplish that with most food if you had enough of it. And so the sensible thing to do was to eat the things you got most of for your money.

But presently Annie learned how to get around him. She told him she could fix our lunch herself and after a while he let her do it. Annie fixed them, when Dad had gone upstairs after breakfast, in imitation of those we saw the well-to-do "American" youngsters eat. We had no cheese or ham, but she fried eggs and put them between thin slices of bread. Or she made sandwiches of the scraps of pork left over from supper. And she cut off the crust. It was not thrown away, however; we muched it on the way to school.

So began our Americanization.

I graduated from high school with second honors, while Annie was fourth on the list of about 200 and Mike and Joe, coming up behind us, both had above-average records.

Our graduation was a great personal triumph for Dad. In those days few "foreign" youngsters finished high school and here were two of his children at one throw. He was in a fidget of excitement... He wore a new suit, new shoes, a new hat; and we had new outfits too. Dad let us buy what we wished. He wanted us to be like the rest of the youngsters. "Like odder Americans, you betcha!" He now had seven thousand dollars, all of it destined for our education.

I liked Monongahela College, and worked hard and became a good student. I made friends readily. I majored in history; literature and English interested me. In my junior year I was editor of the literary magazine and later was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Aside from a few slightly unpleasant experiences, there was no prejudice against me...

In my senior year I decided I wanted to teach English, so I went to the University of Illinois and in '29 got a Master's degree.

That summer I did everything possible to find a college teaching position. I failed. I went to Monongahela College for some special courses in pedagogy.

One day Professor Clark, who was a friend of mine, asked me if I had ever thought of changing my name. He said if I didn't, I might have a tough time getting into education. He thought my name might have affected my chances at college teaching. Not that colleges had any hard rule against "foreign" names. "Sobuchanowsky" might be perfectly all right for a professor of physics or mathematics or foreign languages; for a teacher of English it didn't sound very well.

This bothered me. I resented his suggestion a little. But he was right. There was no place for me anywhere in western Pennsylvania, not even in my hometown. Many of my applications were not so much as acknowledged. A few superintendents, especially those near Pittsburgh, informed me that nobody named Sobuchanowsky could teach English or anything else in any of their schools.

The following fall Dr. Clark accepted an important position in the Cleveland school system and asked me if I would care to teach in a high school there. I said I would, of course.

He said he needed history teachers. Then he wrote my name on a pad, looked at it a minute and said: "I have mentioned this before. Now I want you in Cleveland, you'll make a good history teacher. You will not

be the only one with a foreign name. I have gone through the list and there are names like Gorelik, DeMarlo, Sedlar, and Kovach. But none that I have seen comes up to Sobuchanowsky. It will be easier for you all along the line if you will drop it and take a name like Weaver or Hays or something. Please don't misunderstand me...

I interrupted him, saying I understood perfectly and appreciated his interest. I said I knew he was right, but Sobuchanowsky was my name. I was 27 and somewhat accustomed to it. I told him about my father: how much he had done for me, how grateful I was to him, how I honored him – I hardly knew what I was trying to say. I was upset.

Dr. Clark asked me my father's first name.

"Nicholai or Nicholas," I said. "Everybody calls him Nick."

"Well," he said, "why not take some form of your father's first name for your surname – Nicholas or Nichols?"

I asked him for two or three days to think it over. I went to Pittsburgh to talk with my brothers; I thought they should have a say in the matter. It might be awkward for three brothers to have different surnames.

Mike was immediately in favor of "Nichols." He had been job-hunting and was sure he had been turned down because of "Subuchanowsky." Joe, a reporter on the student daily at Pitt, a Communist, and a self-willed young man, was of a different mind. His name was Sobuchanowsky because it was his old man's and whoever didn't like it could go to hell. If we discarded it we could go to hell too – and he walked out on us.

Mike and I changed our names legally in a Pittsburgh court. We didn't think Dad would mind, but we felt a little guilty and decided not to tell him. A week later Mike had a job...

Annie approved. She had recently solved her own name problem by getting married to a man named Edward Gates.

Shortly after coming to Cleveland I met a girl named Mary Land. We did not pry into each other's past lives. She knew I came from Pennsylvania where my father was a miner; I knew she had been born on a farm in Michigan and that her parents were dead. That was all – enough.

But when we began to see a lot of each other I thought I should tell her about my name. I still was not quite used to being Nichols. Off and on, I came close to signing or introducing myself as Sobuchanowsky.

It was difficult to open the subject. When I finally told her, I was surprised to see her go through a rapid series of moods. At first she listened to me wide-eyed; then she laughed; and finally she cried out almost frantically: "What difference does it make? You're Nichols now! We're both Americans! It makes no difference where our parents came from." She burst into tears and after a while she told me her name had been Schwabenland. Her parents were German immigrants who had had a miserable time of it during the World War. They moved to Detroit and shortened their name. Her mother died; then a few years later, her father. He left her two thousand dollars and she had gone to Oberlin and the University of Michigan. Now at 26 she was secretary to a business executive in Cleveland.

Her story, which she told abruptly, moved me terribly. I proposed to her then and there. We were married a few days later.

When we moved into our apartment Mary typed MR. & MRS. NICHOLS on a card for our mailbox downstairs. "Now, John," she said firmly, "we are Mr. and Mrs. Nichols and that's all there is to it. We are Americans regardless and no matter what! This is a new chapter, and what came before is torn out of the book."...

Dad has never yet met my wife. Shut within her "torn-out-of-the-book" attitude, Mary does not want to meet him. He does not exist. The question has come up in my mind hundreds of times, but never verbally between us.

I didn't see Dad for over a year after I was married. Dexter is only a few hours' drive from Cleveland, but somehow I couldn't bring myself to go.

Then one night while Mary was in New York on business for her boss I drove down on an impulse. I had expected Dad to be in the mine. But there was a light in the house. Suddenly I felt almost afraid to go in. After a while I made myself rap on the door. I heard someone moving around upstairs; then Joe leaned out of the window and yelled down. Who was I and what did I want?

I said, "Hello, Joe - this is John."

Joe only grunted. After a while he came down to let me in. He looked at me with a sneer for what seemed at least a minute, then told me to make myself at home. "Why not?" he said. "After all, Mr. Nichols, you are one of the Sobuchanowskys, too."

I didn't want to start an argument. There was nothing to say anyhow.

...In the morning when Dad got home I had made breakfast on the old stove. He was glad to see me, but matter-of-fact as though I had been gone only a couple of days and had returned just when he expected me to. He asked me only the simplest questions: When did I come? When did I buy my car? How long would I stay? How was my health? Was my woman well, too? I still had my "Jopp"?

He was dirty, bent, and tired, and I made him go to bed.

In the afternoon I walked with him up and down Main Street. He went about his shopping. He stepped into a near-beer place and I followed him in. He put two nickels in a slot-machine, lost both, and gave a twisted smile, shaking his head. He was a caricature of a man, terribly skinny, weighing less than a hundred pounds now, but apparently in good health, so stooped he gave the weird impression of being a question mark. His abnormally long and thin arms swung beside him far and wide; his hands reached almost to his knees. My feelings were all mixed up. I was ashamed of him, and at the same time I wanted to kneel down at his feet in public. I suppose this is the Slav in me...

Dad cooked supper that afternoon, as he had when we were children. Joe had disappeared, and Dad and I ate alone. The way he served the food, the way he ate, would have disgusted our Cleveland friends, and the food was crude. But I ate with a curious enjoyment. Dad talked a little, in his native language peppered with ill-pronounced English words and phrases, and I found a satisfaction in being able to understand him. He bustled about the kitchen, he ran upstairs; there was still much of the frantic, furtive manner about him. He shrugged his shoulders about "Tchoe."

He made thick baloney sandwiches exactly as he had made them when I was a boy; but I noticed he put an apple in his lunch-pail. I had told him I was returning to Cleveland that evening, so he insisted on making some sandwiches for me – I was going on a far journey.

He washed the dished. I dried them. Promptly at quarter to six we shook hands and he left for his night's work.

I drove off. But after a while I couldn't see for the tears in my eyes. I parked somewhere and cried like an idiot. Instead of driving to Cleveland that evening, I stopped at a tourist house. I tried to get myself into a common-sense frame of mind. I told myself that of course I loved Dad, but he was impossible for Mary and our Cleveland crowd.

Mary was right: so far as our life was concerned it was best for him, and my old name, to stay "torn out of the book." But I made up my mind to see Dad once a year at least. I would drive down when Mary went away somewhere so I would not have to explain...

This was nearly seven years ago, I have been to Dexter every summer since and twice at Easter, too. Sometimes I stay two or three days, walking up and down Main Street with Dad in the afternoon.

Between whiles I have – with periodic lapses – maintained the hard, the "sensible" attitude to which Mary and I agreed the day we moved into our apartment. We have been married eight years, and I still love my wife – if I am not required to define love. I am certainly very fond of her; I admire her. Barbara is an adorable child – six and a half, a vivid, healthy, and clear personality. If I should say that I am probably happier than most husbands and fathers, it would be a good guess.

This is my ninth year in the same school in Cleveland. I like teaching, and I am considered good at it. And if I should say that I am happy in my work, it would also be approximately correct.

Should my "foreign" name burst into the open, it is apt to affect my professional standing. My teaching might become less effective. Even pupils of Slavic parentage might lose their respect for me. How can a man named Sobuchanowsky speak of "our Founding Fathers"? Even as John Nichols I have a hard time giving myself a sense of reality in the classroom. That a youngster named Quatrociocchi should talk about "our fore-fathers" struck me as ludicrous; if it gets out that I am "really" Sobuchanowsky, I may well sound ludicrous to the students.

My whole teaching relationship is rather unreal – and quite in keeping with my personal mess. Our school is considered one of the best in the city. But I wonder. A high percentage of our pupils are sons and daughters of immigrants: Italian, Polish, Slovenian, Jewish, Czech, Hun-

garian. Yet the textbooks pay next to no attention to this fact. And we teachers proceed routine fashion on the assumption that youngsters named Podreznik, Ruspini, Valentincich, Ziamal, Ruminskinski, Utz, Evankovitz, and Bosnyak have the same background as those named Wells and Price. But there is a terrible contradiction. While our formal presentation of material pre-supposes the same background, the rest of our behavior makes a distinction between our "American" pupils and the children with "foreign" names...

Every term I single out some youngster named Lupishinsky or Podpratnikar who seems to be troubled by something inside and around him that he cannot understand, and I try to help him. I try to make him feel that it is perfectly all right to have foreign-born parents, that he is no less American, no less valuable a person....

I am not – I am not free. At times I feel like a sneak and a fake. I never have the guts to tell a student that I, too, am the son of an immigrant. Nor can I bring myself to tell his parents that my father also is a foreigner.

As to Dad, I am sure he is outside all this. There he is in Dexter pretty much as he always was. He works, eats, sleeps, saves his money. In his close, narrow way he is content with himself. He thinks he has made the grade in America. And he has...

Persisting Questions of History

Justifying a Personal Decision. To what extent do you think that John Sobuchanowsky's decision to change his name was brought about by *objective circumstances* (the way other people actually treated him) or by his own *personal desire* to find a new identity with "old American stock"? Do you approve of John's changing his name? Justify your answer. Should John have made a greater effort to bring his wife and child into contact with his father so that they could have come to know one another? Why?

Defining American. John Nichols spoke of "American" children and "foreign" children and about becoming "Americanized." How would you define "American"? Are people born in the United States "more American" than those who have moved here from another nation? Why or why not?

Analyzing Discrimination. German immigrants to this country were welcomed until the United States entered World War I against Germany and Austria. Americans then turned against their neighbors of German descent with violent attacks and criticism. German language was eliminated from school and college curricula. German fries, the crisp potatoes served with breakfast, became American fries. Many German-Americans, desperate to show their patriotism to the country of their migration or birth, changed their names or publicly chastized Germany for its actions in the war.

After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, the U.S. government rounded up Japanese nationals and Japanese Americans and placed them in internment camps. Their property was confiscated.

In 1979, when Iranians seized the U.S. embassy in Tehran, several attacks upon Iranian citizens and Americans of Iranian descent were reported. One such incident resulted in the shooting of a teenager by an Iranian student who was being harassed by a group of teenagers.

These cases are examples of using a group's ethnic heritage against them because of actions by the government in their native country. Do you think such actions are reasonable precautions or unfair discrimination? To what extent do you think persons of foreign birth have posed a greater threat to national security than other Americans? How might you account for the fact that Germans and Italians, whose home countries were also at war against the United States, were not placed in internment camps in 1942?

Testing a Theory About the Grandchildren of Immigrants. Historian Marcus Lee Hanson, himself the son of Danish and Norwegian immigrants, developed a theory about third-generation Americans. He believed that while the children of the immigrants – like John Nichols – were often ashamed of their "foreignness" and wanted to become like other Americans, the grandchildren of the immigrants are curious about and proud of their special heritage.

Test this theory by talking with the child of an immigrant, as well as a third-generation American (the grandchild of an immigrant). Do the people you talk to still speak their native language? Do they practice customs from their native land? How do they feel about being both American and Korean, Italian, Honduran, etc.? Of course, if you are the child or grandchild of an immigrant, you can indicate whether the theory applies to your own situation.

Immigration Policy to 1924

For more than a hundred years, American immigration policy was practically an open door to all. Yet there had always been those Americans who resented and feared "foreigners," and doubted the nation's ability to absorb them. The reading below provides an overview of how immigration policy developed. As you read, look for evidence that feelings about who was "American" influenced public policy.

* * * * *

On the eve of the Revolution, the population of the colonies, though predominantly of English and African origin, represented several nationalities. There were large settlements of Scotch-Irish on the frontier. There were Welsh and Germans in Pennsylvania, Swedes in present-day Delaware, and Danes, Scots, Irish, and Finns in Philadelphia. The test of Americanism came to hinge on one's date of arrival. Older residents often viewed newcomers as intruders.

In 1798 Congress bowed to popular pressure and passed the Alien and Sedition Act, which authorized the expulsion of foreigners considered a threat to the peace and safety of the United States. The act also extended residence requirements for naturalization (acquisition of citizenship) from 5 to 14 years.

In the 1830s and 1840s the first great wave of immigration – a wave that placed nearly a million poverty-stricken Irish on America's shores – heightened hostility toward foreigners. The Irish drew some of the hottest fire because of their Catholicism. Some Americans pictured the Irish as agents sent by the Pope to subvert American society. Later the Irish, in their turn, would discriminate against other religious minorities.

In the 1850s antiforeign feeling found an outlet in a secret patriotic society called the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner. Its members pledged to guard the rights of native Americans against all foreigners and to fight Roman Catholicism. They were known as Know-Nothings because, when asked about their aims, they replied, "I know nothing."

Meanwhile, Chinese were arriving on the West Coast. They worked as mine-diggers, railroad laborers, laundrymen, cigar-makers, and house servants. By 1880, there were an estimated 75,000 Chinese in California.

The Chinese were willing to work long hours for low wages. Some Americans, fearing that cheap Chinese labor would undermine white workers, agitated and rioted against what they called the "yellow peril."

In 1877 Dennis Kearney, an Irish immigrant, organized the Workingman's Party, which pledged to "rid the country of cheap Chinese labor...by all means in our power." The Workingman's Party attracted wide attention. In 1877, the California senate conducted hearings on the Chinese question. Its report mirrored popular anti-Chinese sentiment: The Chinese, the report declared, were an alien and corrupting influence because, among other things, "they have never adapted themselves to our habits, modes of dress, or our educational system; have never learned the sanctity of an oath...never discovered the difference between right and wrong, never ceased worship of their idol gods...

In 1882 the U.S. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act. It suspended immigration of all Chinese for a period of ten years and forbade naturalization of Chinese. In 1908 President Roosevelt made a "Gentlemen's Agreement" with Japan, which agreed to deny passports to laborers wishing to come to the United States. The Immigration Act of 1917 barred immigration from India, Indochina, Afghanistan, Arabia, the East Indies, and other smaller Asian countries.

After 1880, immigrants to the United States came primarily from southern and eastern, rather than northern, Europe. As the rate of the "new" immigration quickened, many Americans became alarmed. They began to demand legislation to exclude Slavs, Italians, Greeks, Russians, Poles, and others who were seen as different from "old" immigrants.

The old immigrants, such as those from Germany and Scandinavia, were usually literate; they were predominantly Protestant and many of them were skilled workers. The vast majority learned the language, adopted new ways, and soon became indistinguishable from their American neighbors. The new immigrants were often illiterate and unskilled; they were Catholic, Jewish, and Greek Orthodox in religion; they congregated in "Little Italys" and "Little Polands," where they retained their native languages and customs. Some Americans began to believe that these groups could not be assimilated into U.S. society.

Three months after passing the Chinese Exclusion Act, Congress enacted the first federal immigration law. It forbade the immigration of criminals, paupers, and the insane. It also required an immigrant to prove to officials that he or she would not become a "public charge."

Those who could not support themselves (e.g., children) had to produce a statement by a friend or relative promising support.

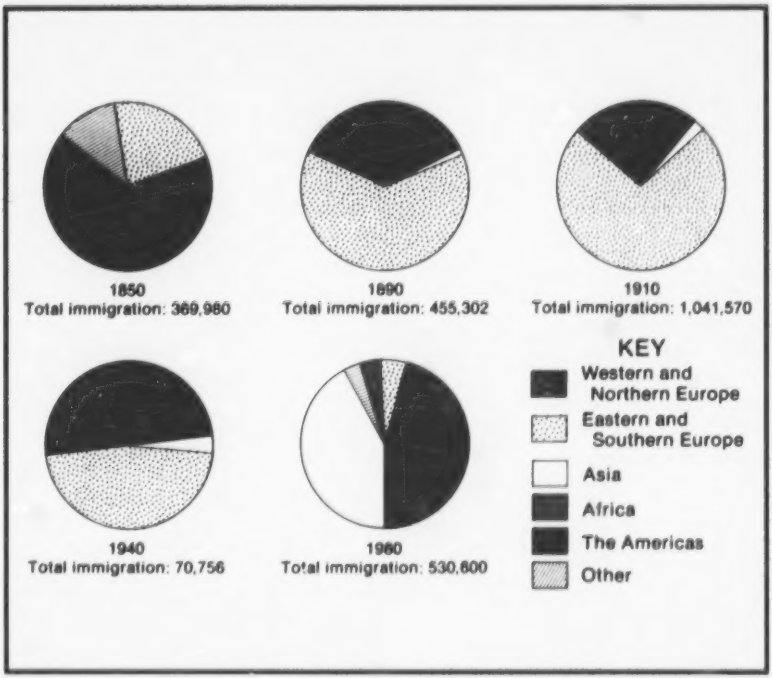
In 1891, Congress enacted full-scale federal control of immigration, although the regulations and their enforcement actually affected only overseas immigrants, not those who crossed the borders from either Canada or Mexico. Federal responsibility for immigration relieved the states from monitoring the newcomers. Private charitable organizations, which had been overburdened by the increasing flow of immigrants, now gave way to federal agents who were responsible for providing services to the newly-arrived.

The 1891 law established minimum health requirements for admission: "persons suffering from a loathsome or dangerous contagious disease" were no longer accepted. The act also contained an effective method of deportation, as steamship companies were now compelled to return all unacceptable passengers to their country of origin. Aliens who landed illegally or those who became public charges were subject to deportation. Contract laborers were also more effectively excluded.

About 75 percent of all immigrants arrived in New York City. When the old facility, Castle Garden, proved to be inadequate, Ellis Island was built to take its place. There, the immigrants were processed in a much more orderly and thorough fashion. In the late 1890s, more stringent examination of immigrants resulted in the rejection of nearly 3,000 persons every year. By 1910, 24,000 immigrants were barred annually from entering the country. Of these, nearly 15 percent were rejected for health reasons, another 15 percent as contract laborers, and the rest as potential charity cases.

Even as the laws governing immigration became more restrictive, public sentiment called for even more regulations. After President McKinley was assassinated in 1901, Congress barred anarchists and saboteurs from entry. Partly as a result of political pressure from such groups as the Immigration Restriction League, repeated attempts (in 1896, 1898, 1902, 1906, 1913, and 1915) were made to enact literacy as a requirement for admission. In 1917, a literacy test was finally enacted. Every immigrant over 16 years of age who could not pass the test was turned back.

This legislation was partly the result of World War I, which stimulated profound distrust of everything foreign. Charges of disloyalty were hurled at "hyphenated" Americans (e.g., German-Americans, Italian-Americans)



How did the character of immigration into America change in the late 1800s? What effect did these changes have on U.S. immigration policy?

and Americans were generally fearful of foreigners in their midst. Such an atmosphere created fertile soil for further immigration restrictions.

By 1921, it was clear that the literacy test was not having its desired effect. In that year nearly 800,000 immigrants arrived. In addition, the number of southern and eastern Europeans was still quite high. In the Emergency Quota Act, Congress passed a new type of immigration law. It limited the number of immigrants entering the United States in any one year to 3 percent of the size of each nationality group that had been living in the United States in 1910. This policy favored the older Anglo-Saxon and northern European stock, who were more numerous than immigrants from southern and eastern Europe in that year.

The maximum annual quota was set at 357,802. Of this total, approximately 56 percent was allotted to immigrants from northern and western Europe. Eastern and southern European immigrants received a quota of about 44 percent. The quota system drastically limited immigration from eastern and southern Europe, which had been running four times as large as that from the rest of Europe.

In 1921, the Supreme Court also dealt a blow to Asian immigrants in a decision barring them from citizenship. In the case of Takao Ozawa, a University of California graduate and 20-year resident of the United States, the Supreme Court upheld a lower court's decision denying Ozawa U.S. citizenship. Even though the court acknowledged Ozawa's fitness for citizenship, it claimed the immigration laws applied only to free white persons and aliens of African nativity. The Japanese and other Asians were not included. This restriction was not lifted until 1952.

Persisting Questions of History

Enforcing Policy. The various immigration laws enacted by Congress established policies that had to be enforced. In general, do you think the following policies could be enforced in a fair way? What factors make a policy difficult to enforce fairly?

- Identifying who was a charity or *potential* charity case?
- Identifying anarchists or saboteurs?
- Defining literacy and developing a fair test?
- Defining a "loathsome or dangerous" disease?

Analyzing Policy. What generalizations can you make concerning American immigration policy from 1798 to 1921? Give evidence from the essay to justify your generalizations. If your generalizations are true, do you think the United States saw itself as a "refuge of the oppressed" in 1921? If not, how might you summarize the nation's view of itself?

The Case of Joseph Revesz

The new quota system sometimes separated immigrant families and created personal hardship. The reading below describes the case of the Revesz family, from Yugoslavia. The father, Joseph, had come to the United States in 1914. In 1921, his wife and two sons were trying to join him in Chicago. The reading is based on letters and memos taken from the files of the Immigrants' Protective League of Chicago.

* * * * *

On November 19, 1921, Mrs. Revesz and the couple's two sons arrived in New York on the *S.S. France*. They were not allowed to leave Ellis Island, however, because the quota for Yugoslavia had already been reached. On November 21, Joseph Revesz petitioned the government to allow his family to enter the United States. His petition said, in part:

> November 21, 1921 – I hereby petition that Teresa Revesz, age 37, wife; Adam Revesz, age 16, son, and Joseph Revesz, age 12, son, who arrived on *S.S. France* at New York on November 19, 1921, be permitted to enter the United States. I promise to hold harmless the United States and each State, Territory, County and Municipality against these persons ever becoming a public charge and agree to send any who are under sixteen to school until at least sixteen years of age.
>
> I, Joseph Revesz, being duly sworn, depose and state that I was born on the 7th day of September, 1882, in the town of Eula, country of Jugo-Slavia. I emigrated to the United States in 1914. I also state that I am a resident of Chicago and live at 500 Siegel Street, in a five-room flat, alone. The flat is prepared for my family. I further state that I am not a citizen of the United States. I have first papers...secured in the Circuit Court of Cook County on September 1, 1921. My present occupation is that of a teamster. I am employed by the Southwestern Ice Company, 1200 Peoria Street. My average weekly earnings are $45; my approximate net savings since arrival in the United States are $600. I have personal property valued at $600, as follows: furniture $400, cash $200.

> The telegram received from Ellis Island states that my family is "excess quota." I respectfully ask that they be allowed to make me a visit at least.
>
> Joseph Revesz

On November 25, Mr. Lawson, a relative of Mrs. Revesz and Mr. Revesz's employer, visited the Immigrants' Protective League. He was worried about what would happen to Mr. Revesz if his family were deported. During World War I, when he did not hear from his wife for several years, Mr. Revesz drank heavily. He was now afraid that his wife would die of grief and humiliation if she were sent back to Yugoslavia.

On December 3, Mrs. Revesz and the boys were deported. Mr. Revesz broke down completely when he was told the news. For a time, Mr. Lawson feared that he would have to fire Mr. Revesz. Mr. Lawson did not give up his efforts to help the Revesz family, however. On December 23, he took a letter he had received from a congressman to the Immigrants' Protective League. It read:

> My Dear Mr. Lawson:
>
> I beg to call your attention to the enclosed letter from the Assistant Secretary of Labor, which is self-explanatory. I had this case up with him and went over it carefully with him. He said there were a hundred cases from Jugo-Slavia asking for temporary admission and that after carefully considering the matter and going over it with the Secretary of Labor they had decided not to admit any of these cases temporarily. I have done everything that can be done in the matter. It is a question of asking the Department to break the law, and they do not appreciate our urging such matters, although in this case I did beg him to make it special and urged that his wife and two children be allowed to go to see their husband and father and the home he had prepared for them, even for a short time. Regretting my inability to aid in this matter, and with kind personal regard, I beg to remain,
>
> Yours very truly,
> M.A. McMILLAN

Enclosed with the Congressman's letter was the following letter from the Department of Labor:

I note your keen interest in the case of Teresa Revesz and her two children...

These aliens were destined to husband and father, a resident of Chicago who has obtained his declaration of intention papers and who is, apparently, fully capable of providing for them properly. This latter question did not receive much attention for reason that these aliens are not members of any of the classes exempt from the application of the Act of May 19, 1921, and their exclusion was mandatory. They do come within the classes to whom special preference is to be shown, but this is predicated upon there being a quota balance to which their admission may be charged, and there being no balance, this feature of the case does not apply.

The department has consistently extended every consideration to aliens coming to visit their children in the United States, or coming to make their homes with such children, and also to children who are coming to their parents in this country, even where the quota has been exhausted for the entire year. Such aliens are often admitted temporarily for the purpose of visiting their relatives, it being felt that the hardship of deportation...will be somewhat lessened by such visit. But that particular hardship does not exist in the present case, as Mrs. Revesz has her parents abroad, the children are with their mother, and the hardship of deportation is considered no greater at this time than it would be, say, two or three months hence.

Then, further, much pressure is brought upon the Department to extend the temporary admission of such aliens, oftentimes expressly with a view to delaying deportation until after the incoming of a new fiscal year with its new quota...Each and every case is an "individual" one in the minds of those interested or affected, and the Department must take, as a basis of its actions, the letter and spirit of the law....

Mr. Revesz sent his wife new steamship tickets the next spring, but she returned them when their son was drafted into the Yugoslavian army. She would not go to the U.S. and leave her son behind.

Persisting Questions of History

Defining Fairness. *Webster's* defines *fair* as "marked by impartiality and honesty: free from self-interest, prejudice, or favoritism." Discuss this definition and make any revisions you feel are needed. Then use the revised definition to determine whether the Revesz family was treated fairly. Be sure to consider the reasons why Mrs. Revesz and the children were deported, as well as the reasons they were not allowed to visit Mr. Revesz. During the discussion, remember to stop periodically to assess your group's progress.

Assessing Your Discussion Skills. Throughout this unit, your class has been working on discussing three kinds of issues: ethical or value issues, definitional issues, and fact-explanation issues. Think about the discussion of the Revesz family your group just completed. How well did you do at identifying and dealing with each type of issue?

Use the following scale to rate yourself: 1 = excellent, 2 = very good, 3 = good, 4 = fair, 5 = poor. You do not have to share your ratings with the class or your teacher. Use them to improve your discussion skills as you work on the rest of the unit.

	Identifying This Type of Issue	Dealing With This Type of Issue
Ethical-value issues		
Definitional issues		
Fact-explanation		

Race, Nationality, and Worth

The debates on immigration restriction, which raged for years, often sought to judge human worth in racial and ethnic terms.

Senator Lodge

In a speech to the U.S. Senate on March 16, 1896, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts supported a literacy test with arguments based on notions of human worth.

* * * * *

Mr. President, this bill is intended to amend the existing law so as to restrict still further immigration to the United States. Paupers, diseased persons, convicts, and contract laborers are now excluded. By this bill it is proposed to make a new class of excluded immigrants... The bill is of the simplest kind. The first section excludes from the country all immigrants who cannot read and write either their own or some other language. The second section merely provides a simple test for determining whether the immigrant can read or write...

The illiteracy test will bear most heavily upon the Italians, Russians, Poles, Hungarians, Greeks, and Asiatics, and very lightly, or not at all, upon English-speaking emigrants or Germans, Scandinavians, and French. In other words, the races most affected by the illiteracy test are those whose emigration to this country has begun with the last 20 years and swelled rapidly to enormous proportions, races with which the English-speaking people have never hitherto assimilated, and who are most alien to the great body of the people of the United States....

The statistics prepared by the committee show further that the immigrants excluded by the illiteracy test are those who remain for the most part in congested masses in our great cities....The committee's report proves that illiteracy runs parallel with the slum population, with criminals, paupers, and juvenile delinquents of foreign birth or parentage, whose percentage is out of all proportion to their share of the total population when compared with the percentage of the same classes among the native born. It also appears from investigations which have been made that the immigrants who would be shut out by the illiteracy test are those who bring least money to the country and come most quickly upon public or private charity for support.

I have said enough to show what the effects of this bill would be, and that if enacted into law it would be fair in its operation and highly beneficial in its results. It now remains for me to discuss the second and larger question, as to the advisability of restricting immigration at all. This is a subject of the greatest magnitude and the most far-reaching importance. It has two sides, the economic and the social. As to the former, but few words are necessary. There is no one thing which does so much to bring about a reduction of wages and to injure the American wage earner as the unlimited introduction of cheap foreign labor through unrestricted immigration. Statistics show that the change in the race character of our immigration has been accompanied by a corresponding decline in its quality.

The number of skilled mechanics and of persons trained to some occupation or pursuit has fallen off, while the number of those without occupation or training, that is, who are totally unskilled, has risen in our recent immigration to enormous proportions. This low, unskilled labor is the most deadly enemy of the American wage earner, and does more than anything else toward lowering his wages and forcing down his standard of living....

I now come to the aspect of this question which is graver and more serious than any other....That which concerns us...is whether the quality of our citizenship is endangered by the present course and character of immigration to the United States.

This momentous fact is the one which confronts us today, and if continued, it carries with it future consequences far deeper than any other event of our times. It involves, in a word, nothing less than the possibility of a great and perilous change in the very fabric of our race....

President Wilson

In a message of January 28, 1915, President Wilson explained his objections to the literacy bill.

* * * * *

In two particulars of vital consequence this bill embodies a radical departure from the traditional and long-established policy of this country, a policy in which our people have conceived the very character of their government to be expressed, the very mission and spirit of the nation in respect of its relations to the peoples of the world outside their borders. It seeks to all but close entirely the gates of asylum, which have always been open to those who could find nowhere else the right and opportunity of constitutional agitation for what they conceived to be the natural and inalienable rights of men; and it excludes those to whom the opportunities of elementary education have been denied, without regard to their character, their purposes, or their natural capacity....

The right of political asylum has brought to this country many a man of noble character and elevated purpose who was marked as an outlaw in his own less fortunate land, and who has yet become an ornament to our citizenship and to our public councils. The children and compatriots of this illustrious Americans must stand amazed to see...their nation now resolved...to risk turning such men back from our shores without test of quality or purpose. It is difficult for me to believe that the full effect of this feature of the bill was realized when it was framed and adopted, and it is impossible for me to assent to it in the form in which it is here cast.

The literacy test and the tests and restrictions which accompany it constitute an even more radical change in the policy of the nation. Hitherto we have generously kept our doors open to all who were not unfitted by reason of disease or incapacity for self-support or such personal records and antecedents as were likely to make them a menace to our peace and order or to the wholesome and essential relationships of life. In this bill it is proposed to turn away from tests of character and of quality and impose tests which exclude and restrict; for the new tests here embodied are not tests of quality or of character or of personal fitness, but tests of opportunity. Those who come seeking opportunity are not to be admitted unless they have already had one of the chief of the opportunities they seek, the opportunity of education. The object of such provisions is restriction, not selection....

Congressman Emanuel Celler

Congressman Emanuel Celler spoke against the act.

* * * * *

Many who have heretofore spoken on the bill have boasted of their ancestry and have in glowing terms referred to the Anglo-Saxon forebears and wonderful family trees of some of the racial stocks now here. In answer I say most family trees are like ordinary trees; the best parts are underground....

Let us at least be truthful. In fact, deception is futile. It is as clear as the sun that the majority of the Immigration Committee and most proponents of this measure like the gentleman from Kansas, who blurted out his true feelings while talking on the bill, do not want the "wops," "dagoes," "Hebrews," "hunkies," "bulls," and others known by similar epithets. Just so, in 1840, 1850, and 1860 you did not want the "beery Germans" and "dirty Irish." The Germans and Irish were mongrels, self-seekers, disreputable, and would not assimilate. We know now how good a citizenry they have become....

The fallacy of "Nordic supremacy" was made popular by one Madison Grant, who wrote a book called the *Passing of a Great Race*.... His argument is very much like the following: The "Nordics" are superior. They are superior because they have light skin, a narrow skull, and blue eyes. All those who have a light skin, narrow skull, and blue eyes are superior. Therefore, the "Nordics" are superior. He assumes the very thing that he starts out to prove.

Similar would-be scientists claim that the brain of man, and therefore his native intelligence, is dependent upon his physical characteristics. Certain brains go with certain anatomical markings. They say, for example, good brains go with narrow skulls, light complexions, and blue eyes. The whole thing is outrageously absurd. We know that the very weight of the brain is no index whatsoever to the brain's capacity or intelligence. The brains of women, for example, are lighter than the brains of men. Can one, therefore, say that the intelligence of man is superior to that of woman?

Professor Boas, in his book *The Mind of Primitive Man*, states that the skulls of 35 eminent men were examined and their brains were found to have weighed less than the average, whereas the brains of 45 murderers were measured and the weight of each was superior to the

average. There is, therefore, no relationship of intelligence to the size and shape of the head.

I think the essential point to stress is that there are a great many inferior strains in every race, including the "Nordic," and that there are many superior strains also in other races, no matter what they may be. Then let us take the best in every race. Let us have selection and not racial restriction of any sort.

Persisting Questions of History

Analyzing Arguments. In what ways were these politicians debating issues of fact/explanation, definition, and values? Which of the following methods did they use to support their arguments? Were these appropriate methods? Explain your reasoning.

- Use of value-laden language
- Use of a respected source
- Prediction of a value consequence
- Identification of a conflicting value
- Reference to common knowledge
- Personal observation
- Stipulation
- Analogy

Defining the Public Interest. As officials of the U.S. government, Lodge, Wilson, and Celler each had a responsibility to protect the public interest. But individuals have varying views of the public interest. Judging from their views of immigration, what view of the public interest does each of these men have? Which do you agree with most closely?

Developing Criteria. If we agree that it is necessary to restrict immigration on some basis, the problem is to arrive at a policy that will be most fair and will best protect the interests of the United States. Evaluate the following criteria, which might be used to determine whether an immigrant should be allowed to enter this country. Then make up an application form to be used by persons applying for immigrant status. Explain why your questions and the types of information you request are important.

a. Candidates for immigration should already speak English.

b. Candidates should be able to read and write their native language even if they cannot speak English.

c. Candidates should never have committed a felony (serious crime) *in their native country.*

d. Candidates should never have been involved in subversive activities in their native country.

e. Candidates should be given special consideration if they have tried to overthrow an autocratic government and are being persecuted for this political activity.

f. Candidates should be given special consideration if they live in a country constantly threatened by famine.

g. Candidates should be given special consideration if they have been educated in the United States and have friends here.

h. Other criteria you think could be added to the list.

Applying Criteria. Duplicate the application form and fill out several with information given by people in your community who are immigrants or who have known immigrants. Do not use the real names of the people you talked to. Then rank the applicants according to which should be allowed to enter the country first.

Immigration Policy, 1924-1988

Since 1924, the United States has riden a roller coaster through the hills and valleys of immigraticn policy – from quotas, to no quotas, to sanctions against employers.

* * * * *

Opponents of immigration were unhappy with the Immigration Act of 1921 because they felt that it still admitted too many of the "wrong" kinds of foreigners. To some extent, this attitude was a product of the times. The nation's experience in World War I soured people against involvement with other nations. Diplomatically, the United States wrapped itself in a cloak of isolationism.

The most extreme position was taken by the Ku Klux Klan, which, in this respect, became the successor of the Know-Nothings. The Klan was anti-black, anti-Catholic, anti-Jewish – against everybody not white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant.

The vast majority of Americans had little interest in the KKK. Yet at the same time many felt some of the same feelings – concern about radical political ideas, the impact of Catholics and Jews on American society. Many believed that too many foreigners would upset the ethnic balance of America and that immigration had gone far enough.

As immigration again reached high levels after the lull during World War I, popular pressure for a more stringent policy increased. Congress responded by passing a new and more drastic immigration law in 1924.

The Immigration Act of 1924 created a permanent quota system (that of 1921 was only temporary), reducing the 1921 annual quota from 358,000 to 164,000. In addition, the Act reduced the immigration limit from 3 percent to 2 percent of each foreign-born group living in the United States in 1890. Using 1890 rather than 1910 or 1920 excluded the new wave of foreign-born from southern and eastern Europe from quotas truly proportionate to their new numbers in the population. Finally, the act provided for a future reduction of the quota to 154,000.

The new law cut the quota for northern and western European countries by 29 percent, but slashed that for southern and eastern Europe by 87 percent. Italy's quota, for example, was reduced from 42,057 to 3,845 persons.

In addition, all immigrants now had to obtain a visa from an American consul in their country of origin. Since part of the thrust of the 1924 law was to select those best suited to American society, this system permitted an initial screening of immigrants.

The quota system did not apply to countries in the Western Hemisphere. The United States did not want to alienate its neighbors, and it needed workers, especially those from Mexico. During World Wars I and II, the U.S. recruited thousands of temporary workers from Mexico to harvest crops in our labor-short farmland.

In 1929 the quota system based on national origin went into effect. In the 1930s, immigration to the United States markedly decreased, in part because of the 1929 Act, but also because of worldwide economic depression. Large portions of most quotas were therefore unfilled. At the same time, thousands of persons sought to flee totalitarian regimes like that in Nazi Germany. Since American immigration policies failed to distinguish between immigrants and refugees in the quota counts, most of the refugees (principally Jews) were barred from coming to the United States.

From 1924 to 1947, only 2,718,006 immigrants came to the United States, a total equal to the number entering during any two-year period before World War I. In the 1930s, for the first time in U.S. history, those leaving the United States outnumbered those entering.

After World War II, several measures temporarily eliminated the rigid provisions of the quota system. In 1948 Congress passed the Displaced Persons Act, which made it possible for some 400,000 refugees of the war to come to America. When the Cold War heated up in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the U.S. government recognized the needs of persons displaced by Communist takeovers. In 1953 the Refugee Relief Act came to the rescue of some 214,000 people who had fled Communist countries in eastern Europe. Under the same authority, 21,500 Hungarians fleeing their homeland after the failure of the 1956 revolt were admitted to the United States. The Cuban Refugee Program, established in 1961 by President Kennedy, paved the way for thousands of Cuban refugees to find sanctuary in the United States.

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (the McCarran-Walter Act) was the first major legislation on immigration since 1924. But it did little more than affirm the old national origins quota system. The act codified and slightly amended existing immigration laws. It permitted the

naturalization of Asians, previously ineligible due to the Supreme Court's 1922 *Ozawa* decision. The Act opened the quota system to countries in what it designated as the "Asia-Pacific Triangle." The quotas were token numbers: 185 for Japan, 105 for China, and 100 each for the island countries and colonies of the Pacific such as Hong Kong. All peoples in the Asia-Pacific Triangle were labeled "undesirables" by the U.S. government. Perhaps reflecting the anti-Communist hysteria of the 1950s, the act also gave the attorney general authority to expel aliens considered "subversive," regardless of citizenship.

The McCarran-Walter Act became law despite President Truman's veto. He said, "The idea behind this discriminatory policy was, to put it baldly, that Americans with English or Irish names were better citizens than Americans with Italian, Greek, or Polish names.... Such a concept is utterly unworthy of our traditions and our ideas."

Perhaps equally unworthy was the treatment of Mexicans, particularly in the American southwest. Since the late 19th century, Mexican laborers had migrated to the United States and worked for the railroads and on large farms. Such immigration laws as literacy tests severely limited the number of Mexicans who could legally qualify for entry. Nevertheless, employers were willing to hire illegal migrants, since it was easy to steal across the poorly supervised border and there were no effective penalties for either worker or employer if caught.

Several laws allowed temporary workers, called *braceros*, to be admitted for short stays if the Secretary of Labor deemed it in the public interest. These laborers came from many countries in the Western Hemisphere, but more than 70 percent came from Mexico. While these laborers were numerous (In the 1950s, nearly 200,000 were recruited each year), the number of illegal laborers far exceeded the *braceros*. So numerous were Mexican laborers that many feared thay were displacing American workers, depressing wage rates, and hindering the development of unions. Consequently, American officials sought better border controls, the forced return of illegals to Mexico (In 1954 over one million were returned), and eventually the end of the *bracero* program.

By the early 1960s, many Americans were advocating a new immigration policy, especially elimination of the national origins quota system. President Johnson proposed such legislation in 1965, and Congress, with a minimum of delay, passed the bill. On October 3, 1965, President Johnson, standing in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor, signed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. It ordered elimination of the national origins quota system in favor of a worldwide quota blind to national origin. Immigration was redistributed by pooling unused quotas and making them available on a first-come, first-served basis to oversubscribed nations. The Asia-Pacific Triangle designation of "undesirable" was abolished.

After June 30, 1968, an annual overall ceiling of 170,000 applied to all nations outside the Western Hemisphere; a quota of 120,000 was set for nations in the Western Hemisphere. These figures did not include dependents and close relatives. No one nation, the act specified, was allowed more than 20,000 visas a year.

The new law established an admissions system with four ranks of preference: (1) persons whose special skills would be "especially advantageous to the United States"; (2) unmarried adult (over 21 years of age) children of American citizens; (3) spouses and unmarried children of aliens living permanently in the United States; (4) other relatives of persons living in the United States and workers with "lesser skills," who could fill special labor needs. The preferences did not apply to the Western Hemisphere until 1976 when, as the result of complaints by citizens and their alien relatives from Latin America, legislation distributed preferences equally in Eastern and Western Hemisphere countries.

The legislation eliminated the requirement that skilled immigrants have an employer before coming to the United States, but retained this

requirement for unskilled categories. A controversial aspect of the law required an immigrant without relatives in the United States to prove that he/she would take a job that in no way conflicted with U.S. workers.

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 greatly increased immigration from southern Europe and Asia, which had a huge backlog of applicants; entries from western Europe dropped. For the first time in history, a person from an Asian or African nation received the same consideration as a person from France or Germany. In abolishing the national origins quota system, President Johnson said, "We can now believe that it will never again shadow the gate to the American nation with the twin barriers of prejudice and privilege."

Yet immigration "problems" still loomed large in America. Refugees (including many illegals) from civil wars, revolutions, and political and economic oppression in developing countries sought the dream of prosperity still promoted by Americans.

Some refugees applied for political asylum; others applied for visas under the 1965 act. Some were refused entry because they were fleeing governments friendly to the United States. Even today, American citizens daily risk penalties and jail for offering these refugees sanctuary in their homes, their churches, and their communities.

By 1979 a consensus had emerged about the need to reform refugee policy. From then on, 50,000 refugees would be accepted annually, although the president would have the power to admit additional refugees as the need arose. In addition, a new definition of refugee status was accepted: "any person who is outside any country of his nationality or in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which he last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return...because of persecution, or a well-founded fear of persecution, on account or race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion." Finally, 5,000 slots were reserved for people requesting political asylum.

Other abuses under the 1965 act were still being cited by Americans seeking immigration reform. The act gave visa and citizenship preference to spouses and relatives of American citizens. Marriages to aliens became a money-making venture; those caught doing it were charged with fraud. Another method of rising on the preference ladder was to cross the U.S. border illegally to deliver an expected child, thus allowing the parents and other relatives of the new child to apply for visas and/or

citizenship based on the relationship with the child, who, by virtue of his/her birth on U.S. soil, was an American citizen.

Anger toward immigrants was not limited to those who entered illegally. Antagonism against new Asian immigrants, for example, became increasingly violent in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1986, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission released a report that confirmed that "anti-Asian activity in the form of violence, vandalism, harassment and intimidation" was a national problem. *Newsweek* reported in May 1986 that

> [t]ensions between blacks and Asians seem to be primarily a matter of economics. In many cities Korean entrepreneurs in predominantly black neighborhoods now run the delicatessens and corner stores that were a target of violence in the 1960s when whites owned them.... There have also been severe tensions in blue-collar white communities. The newly arrived Asians, many of whom neither speak nor write English and have the values of a different culture, are looked upon with suspicion. Last week Asian-American civil-rights activists protested the acquittal of a man and the mistrial of another charged in the beating death of a Cambodian refugee in Medford, Mass. And last month Robert Lee Stephens was sentenced to prison for assaulting members of Cambodian refugee families in Revere, Mass., a working-class suburb of Boston. "I don't really understand why this happens, but I think it is because they are jealous [of Asians' economic gains]," said Chhay Bip, a Cambodian living in Boston.

Congress acted on the call for new immigration legislation in 1986 by passing the Immigration Reform and Control Act. For the first time in U.S. history, the law imposed sanctions against employers to prevent hiring of illegal aliens. Hispanic groups were concerned that this provision would lead to discrimination against all Hispanic job-seekers. To prevent such discrimination, Congress required that all employees hired after November 6, 1986, be required to show proof of citizenship to employers. Employers proved to have hired illegal aliens after that date would be subject to a fine. The legislation also provided amnesty for illegal aliens who arrived in the United States before January 1, 1982.

Civil rights groups claimed employers would still discriminate against Hispanics to avoid the possibility of being fooled by false documenta-

tion. Others expressed concern for the welfare of refugees fleeing oppression by governments friendly to the United States, who might be caught in a stricter dragnet of enforcement and sent back to face death squads and economic oppression.

Persisting Questions of History

Developing Policy. What circumstances would you take into account as a member of a Congressional committee trying to develop a fair immigration policy? Should effects on jobs, on housing, on the environment, on the country as a whole be considered? How do circumstances in other countries influence immigration to the United States? Should such circumstances be considered in developing policy?

Examining the Central Issues of This Unit. You have read and thought about the experiences of immigrants and about the formation of U.S. immigration policy. For each of the central issues of this unit, write a brief summary of how the readings and discussions so far have contributed to your thinking on these questions:

- What has motivated people to pull up roots and undertake a potentially hazardous journey to a place that may – or may not – be more hospitable? Why have so many migrants chosen the United States as a destination?
- Are immigrants and their descendants treated unfairly or hampered by discrimination? Who is responsible for redressing such problems?
- What is an American? Have some groups been viewed as more "American" than others? Can immigrants strike a balance between their traditions and the "American Way"?
- Should the United States still be a refuge for the oppressed? Do we still see ourselves as a nation of immigrants? What should our immigration policy be?

Analogy Cases

Each set of quotations below includes one quotation from the past and one from a current writer. As you read the quotations, look for similarities and differences among the views expressed.

James H. Collins and Stephen Koepp

In the September 6, 1924, issue of The Saturday Evening Post, *James H. Collins responded to the new restrictive immigration legislation of that year by asking: "Who Will Do Our Dirty Work Now?"*

* * * * *

What a change in Ellis Island! My last visit had been in the booming days before the war, when 5000 immigrants might pass through the gates in one day, and be on their way to jobs. But today the great buildings are almost deserted...

On my last visit the incoming immigrant was a fellow to delight the soul of the employer who likes to find several hundred applicants waiting for jobs at his factory gate tomorrow morning, willing to take any kind of work at any kind of wages. He was common labor, the strong young peasant from Italy, Poland, Hungary and the Balkan states, green in our ways, unskilled in our industrial work. He was the life-blood of our steel, coal, construction, metal-mining and other industries that soaked him up like sponges.

But today any employer looking for common labor in the Ellis Island throng would go home persuaded that the country is going to the dogs. There wasn't one common laborer in 500 of them the day I revisited the island to find out, if possible, what the new immigration law is going to do to our industries that use common labor. The Latin-American is not a laborer; if he isn't a clerk he's probably a cigarmaker. The West Indian negro is not a common laborer; within a month these boys will be emptying waste-baskets or running elevators. The shipload of Germans disclosed no common laborers; women and children mostly. Stunted, worried, the wrack of war; nothing like the big ruddy sausage-eating, *gemutlich*, market-gardening, road-house-keeping, turner-society South

From James H. Collins, "Who Will Do Our Dirty Work Now?", Saturday Evening Post (September 6, 1924). Reprinted with permission of the Saturday Evening Post. Copyright 1924 Curtis Publishing Company.

German of the 70's [sic]... If the immigrant isn't somebody's wife or child he or she is – provided they come from one of the countries that used to furnish huskies to do our dirty work – a member of the aristocracy, the professional or the commercial classes, in reduced circumstances. Either the husky cannot afford to emigrate in these times of reduced European currencies and high steerage rates or the intelligentzia are crowding him out of the quotas.

In June of 1987 Stephen Koepp, in an article for Time Magazine *entitled "Rotten Shame," wanted to know "Who will pick the crops?" Koepp, like Collins before him, was responding to the latest immigration legislation.*

* * * * *

Turned sweet and bright red by unusually warm spring weather, Oregon's strawberries ripened early this year into a bounteous crop of some 80 million lbs. But last week Roy Malensky, a grower in Hillsboro, Ore., who supplies berries for such products as Breyers Ice Cream and Dannon Yogurt, stood in his giant strawberry patch and mourned row upon row of darkened, spoiled fruit. His expected loss: $100,000. To the north, meanwhile, Richard Cowin, a black-cherry grower in Wapato, Wash., watched downheartedly as his crop began to shrivel in the sun.

The rotting shame developing in the Pacific Northwest last week was only the first sign of a crisis that could spread through other agricultural regions of the U.S. this summer as an unintended consequence of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. The problem: a dire shortage of migrant workers, many of them illegal aliens from Mexico who are staying home or sticking close to the border this summer because they are afraid of deportation under the new law. Last week more than one-third of Oregon's $30 million strawberry crop was rotting because only about half the state's usual contingent of 20,000 migrant workers have shown up this spring. Declaring the situation an "unprecedented labor crisis," Oregon Governor Neil Goldschmidt predicted that the state would lose as much as $300 million of its usual $1 billion annual crop of fruits, vegetables and flowers.... Once aliens obtain legal status, they will no longer be quite so willing to do tedious, low-paying farm work, since they can then apply for any job they want.

From Stephen Koepp, "Rotten Shame," Time (June 22, 1987). Used by permission.

Samuel Gompers and Richard D. Lamm

Others have argued that immigrants take jobs from native-born Americans. This was the position taken by labor leader Samuel Gompers in 1923.

* * * * *

The American Federation of Labor is very much opposed to any changes in the immigration laws that would permit more immigrants to come to this country....According to the census of 1920 there are more than 13,000,000-foreign born people living in the United States. Besides, 3,500,000 cannot read or write English and 1,500,000 cannot speak the language. To still further increase the number of non-speaking English immigrants would make the problem of Americanizing our people so much the more difficult.... While the Secretary of Labor has announced that there are 3,000,000 unemployed in the United States, big corporations are declaring that there is a great shortage of labor.... It can be well understood that with many millions of unemployed in the United States the arrival of hundreds of thousands of others anxious to work will make the unemployment situation more acute.

Too many immigrants coming to this country will break down the standards of living of our people. Shutting out from our shores the poor of other nations and races is caused by the law of necessity and self-protection consequent upon our industrial system. Labor does not declare that America is for Americans alone, but it does insist that there should be and must be such a restriction of immigration as will prevent disintegration of American economic standards.

From Samuel Gompers, "Do We Need More Immigrants for Laborers?", special issue on Reasoning Out the Immigration Problem, Congressional Digest, vol. 2 (July-August 1923). Used by permission.

In 1985, Richard D. Lamm, then governor of Colorado, made a similar case for restricting immigration.

* * * * *

Planetary population growth is projected to be of enormous magnitude. The world is going to add a billion people in the next 11 years, 224,000 every day....

We must understand the implications of those numbers. Let's look at the question of jobs. The International Labor Organization projects a 20-year increase of 600 to 700 million people who will be seeking jobs....[more] than the present labor forces of all the industrialized countries taken together.

These people look to the United States....Our border patrol apprehends 3,000 illegal immigrants per day, 1.2 million per year. *And two get in for every one caught; those caught just try again.* [Emphasis his]

Let us examine certain justifications that the opponents of immigration reform have perpetuated:

Illegal immigrants take jobs no Americans want. The fact is that the average illegal immigrant picked up in Denver makes more than $7.00 an hour. Many were making over $100 a day as roofers and we have 438 people registered in our employment services who would love those jobs. The average illegal immigrant apprehended in Chicago makes $5.65 an hour. More than 30 million American workers make less than that.

Another myth is that illegal immigrants work hard, pay taxes, and don't go on welfare. The sad truth is that these folks seem to learn the ropes of the welfare system with incredible speed, partly owing to effective work of our own advocacy groups.

...We must make it illegal to hire an illegal alien.... We must enact safeguards to make sure that illegal immigrants do not have access to our social services.... We must have a ceiling on legal immigration that would stop its growth....

From Richard D. Lamm, "Time to Change Course: The Urgent Need For Immigration Reform," Vital Speeches of the Day, vol. 52, no. 1, (October 15, 1985), pp. 4-7. Used by permission.

Charles D. Williams and Thomas B. Morgan

One issue raised in discussing immigration is cultural differences. A voice of moderation in the 1920s was Bishop Charles D. Williams of the diocese of Michigan.

* * * * *

Here are millions of strangers in a strange land, in the solitude of the crowds, torn up by the roots from their native soil, stript of the age-long traditions and customs that surrounded them from birth, having lost their old social conventions and standards and found no new ones; church, community, often family and home gone, for many of them are single men. Is it any wonder that they often lose their moorings and are driven by gusts of passion and carried by the new ideas of strange life about them to moral shipwreck?

...Is it not high time that we, conceited, self-contained, arrogant Americans, should recognize that these strangers that flock to our gates come, many of them, bearing precious gifts, gifts often that we sadly lack and deeply need? I speak not now of the physical contributions of their labor to our industrial production and material wealth, tho [sic] where would America be to-day [sic] economically, if it were not for the enormous contributions of so-called foreign labor? But I speak of intellectual, literary, artistic contributions, moral and spiritual values. Often the humblest and commonest of them have gifts in them, gifts in which America is characteristically poverty-stricken....

Qualms about the retention of cultural characteristics were expressed by Thomas B. Morgan in 1983.

* * * * *

The latinization of America could be seen as another chapter in our most enduring serial, the Americanization of everybody.... But there was more to the picture, and the source of my alarm turned up there, among stories I'd heard and read about the resistance of middle-class Hispanics to the difficult but (I think) necessary process of assimilation. Since the

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From Charles D. Williams, The Gospel of Fellowship (Fleming H. Revell, 1923).

From Thomas B. Morgan, "The Latinization of America," in Esquire (May 1983). Used by permission of the author.

Seventies there had been a highly publicized Hispanic drive for bilingualism: Spanish-language courses for the transitional training of school kids, as well as maintenance programs for further education in Spanish, with English perhaps as a second language; ballots in Spanish for Hispanic voters as a permanent requirement of election law; even road signs in Spanish for Hispanic motorists. What might come next? The *Congressional Record* in Spanish as well as English? The State of the Union Message with Spanish subtitles? Or, further out, a Quebec-style solution to the problems of integration? That's where I got alarmed: I could imagine a scenario for the latinization of America leading to a divided nation – two Americas, one speaking English, one speaking Spanish.

Persisting Questions of History

Defining the National Identity. Place each of the men quoted in this section on the two continua below. Then place yourself on the continua. What has most influenced your own placement on the two lines?

Views of the United States

Refuge for the Oppressed — America for "Americans"

Views of National Character

Strength Through Diversity — Strength Through Unity, Assimilation

---

Reaching Consensus on the Central Issues of This Unit. Given everything that you have read in this unit, do you think that Americans will ever reach agreement on the central issues of this unit? Why is it so difficult to reach agreement on these issues? Do disagreements of this kind suggest anything about our national identity?

Review, Reflection, and Research

The previous cases have taken you through steps in analyzing a persisting public issue. Here are further activities that aim at deeper analysis and fuller discussion of broad views.

Describing the National Identity

A prominent historian, Arthur M. Schlesinger, has observed that foreign visitors to America have often argued about a stereotype of the typical American. Elements identified as part of this stereotype include:

- a sense of obligation to work
- a high standard of comfort
- faith in progress
- stern pursuit of material gain
- neglect of art, music, and the aesthetic side of life
- large number of spoiled children
- restlessness and fast pace of life (e.g., fast eating)

To what extent do you think this is a valid description of you, your family, and the people in your neighborhood? Must a person fit a particular description to be an "American"?

Investigate another culture, such as Mexico or Japan, and explore whether the traits listed above are common to that culture. If so, what does this say about the concept of a national identity?

Determining Social Responsibility

In July 1987, a boxcar full of illegal aliens from Mexico and two of the men who helped "smuggle" them into the United States was discovered on a siding in Sierra Blanca, a small Texas town 90 miles southeast of El Paso. Only one of the car's occupants was alive, the other 18 having asphyxiated in the airtight steel car designed to carry beer.

Who is responsible for these deaths?

- The smugglers who charged each man $400 to get him into the United States and then, not knowing where the car would go, locked the door of the boxcar and told the occupants to chop holes in the floor when they reached their destination?

- The U.S. government, which patrols its borders and will not let just anyone enter, but holds out a promise of the "good life" to those lucky enough to get in?
- Mexico, whose economy cannot support all its people?
- The Mexicans who chose to come to the United States illegally in order to get work or join relatives?
- The railroad company, which does not patrol its cars?

What factors are most important to you in determining responsibility?

Maintaining Cultural Traditions

The cultural traditions of immigrant groups sometimes come into conflict not only with the "American" cultural, but the U.S. legal system as well. For example, in 1988, a Hmong man living in Denver practiced his culture's traditional way of finding a wife – "marriage by capture." Lee Fong took his young bride from her home and paid her family a $3,000 dowry. They were married for three months. But then the girl went to the Denver police, charging Fong with kidnapping, sexual assault, and menacing.

Fong's case is not unique. Numerous other cases related to marital customs and child-rearing practices that under U.S. law would be considered child abuse have been reported.

In such cases, traditions are clearly in conflict. Discuss whether you believe new immigrants should adjust to the U.S. legal system or the system should become tolerant of their customs. Throughout your discussion, be sure to identify whether you are looking at ethical/value, fact/explanation, or definitional issues and use appropriate strategies for dealing with each.

Thinking About Thinking

As you worked on this unit, how well did you do at thinking about both the issue at hand and the way in which you were discussing the issue? Write a brief essay analyzing what you think you did well and where you could still improve.

To order this unit or for more information on the Public Issues Series, contact:

SSEC Publications
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Boulder, CO 80302

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IMMIGRATION: PLURALISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY TEACHER'S GUIDE

Public Issues Series | Social Science Education Consortium | 1989

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The Public Issues Series

The *Public Issues Series* was originally conceived of by the Harvard Social Studies Project of the 1960s and 1970s. The major purpose of the series – both then and now – is to help students analyze and discuss persisting human dilemmas related to public issues. We would emphasize that the term *public issues* is not synonymous with *current events*. By public issues, we mean problems or value dilemmas persisting throughout history and across cultures. The situations of Christian martyrs in Rome, a bureaucrat in Nazi Germany, a slave in 19th-century America, or an Ethiopian refugee in Texas in 1988 all represent important public issues. We believe that most of the important current events can be clarified by reference to public issues in other places and other times. Thus, all the units in the series suggest parallels between historical illustrations of persisting human dilemmas and present issues in the United States and the world.

The units in the series use historical, fictional, and contemporary situations. They also assist students in using a structured approach to issues analysis and in developing the skills of reasoned discussion. The units are not designed to be followed mechanistically through every question. There is no critical sequence of exercises. Teachers should view the materials provided as possible strategies for developing discussion of public issues and should pick and choose among the materials according to their own goals. In making selections, teachers should note that students will need information from other sources to discuss some questions intelligently; this may be a factor in deciding whether to address those questions.

As classes work with the materials, it is important to give students a sense of progress by periodically summarizing where the case material and discussion have taken them, particularly in terms of their discussion skills and the central, or necessary, questions of the unit.

The Necessary Questions

This unit on immigration focuses on the following organizing questions:

- What has motivated people to pull up roots and undertake a potentially hazardous journey to a place that may – or may not – be more

hospitable? Why have so many migrants chosen the United States as a destination?

- Are immigrants and their descendants treated unfairly or hampered by discrimination? Who is responsible for redressing such problems?
- What is an American? Have some groups been viewed as more "American" than others? Can immigrants strike a balance between their traditions and the "American Way"?
- Should the United States still be a refuge for the oppressed? Do we still see ourselves as a nation of immigrants? What should our immigration policy be?

Primary source documents, secondary sources, and fictional accounts are used to acquaint students with how these questions have manifested themselves in various periods of U.S. history. The first section of the book looks at the experiences of immigrants, focusing on motivations for immigrating and jobs in the United States. The ways in which the children of immigrants deal with issues of "Americanization" are also covered. The focus then shifts to policy issues, with students examining shifts in policy from the late 19th century to the present. Students are asked to weigh arguments on various sides of the policy issues the nation has faced, making comparisons across time.

Analyzing the Issues

In addressing the necessary questions of the unit, students will grapple with ethical-value questions, definitional issues, and issues of fact-explanation. For example, deciding who is responsible for redressing problems experienced by immigrants requires students to examine values or beliefs about social responsibility, both at the individual and governmental levels. Addressing the third necessary question requires students to define "American" and the "American Way"; this definitional issue is emphasized throughout the unit. In examining what the United States' immigration policy should be, students will consider the economic impacts of immigration; in so doing, they will be called upon to judge conflicting factual claims.

As students work through these and other issues, they should practice the explicit stating of issues and use of analogy to clarify their positions, as illustrated in the following classroom discussion on "The Children of the Immigrants":

Student 1: I guess John Nichols was right to change his name because it was the only way he could get a job teaching English. (*Supports value claim by predicting a valued consequence – employment.*)

Student 2: But wasn't that a concession to those people who are prejudiced against "foreigners"? (*Identifies a conflicting value – preserving identity.*)

Student 1: Sure it's a concession, but it didn't hurt anyone, and it helped John get ahead. (*Denies any negative effects of the decision; value of "getting ahead" enhanced.*)

Student 2: Suppose you were applying for a job and you knew it would help to say you had finished high school, but actually you had dropped out. Would you tell the employer you graduated? (*Uses analogy to challenge the denial of negative effects.*)

Student 1: That's different because the job may require skills or knowledge you would only have if you had graduated from high school. John had the skills needed to teach English. It was just prejudice that kept him from getting a job before he changed his name. (*Makes a distinction between the original case and the analogy.*)

Student 2: You're saying that changing his name was relatively unimportant – just a ploy to get a job. But John's feelings about himself changed after he changed his name, so I don't think it was such an unimportant action. I want to discuss how giving in to prejudice affects people. (*Delineates issue and sets agenda.*)

Teaching the Unit

Each Public Issues unit can be taught in a variety of ways. The following is one way to approach *Immigration: Pluralism and National Identity*. Activities that introduce skills with which your students are already familiar can be skipped and the skill briefly reviewed.

Note that this booklet is not intended to replace your usual approach to immigration, but to enhance and expand on it. If you normally cover the development of immigration policy in depth, for example, the section "Immigration Policy to 1924" can be skipped or used as a quick review of the material you have already covered. You might then use "The Case of Joseph Revesz" and "Race, Nationality, and Worth" to encourage students to think more deeply about the values that various policies embodied. The exercises in "Review, Reflection, Research" can be used to evaluate student progress.

If your class includes many recent immigrants, these students can serve as a rich resource for better understanding the issues raised in the unit. You must, however, be sensitive to how comfortable students are talking about their own experiences;

some may be too recent and too painful to be discussed easily in the classroom. Ask students privately whether they are willing to share particular experiences before requesting that they do so in class.

Students may ask why there are so few references to black immigrants in the unit. Initiate a discussion of how the black experience was different from that of any other group (that is, there was no choice involved; blacks came as captives, not as immigrants). Also discuss how experiences of black Americans in dealing with the prevailing view of what an "American" is have been similar to those of immigrant groups covered in the unit.

Preparing to Teach the Unit. Ask students to develop a list of the purposes for discussion. Post these purposes, which might include persuading someone to one's own point of view, simply airing one's feelings on a topic, resolving a problem, clarifying or better understanding opinions and beliefs different from one's own, and "winning." To help students come up with ideas, remind them to think about classroom discussions, political discussions, and discussions in various kinds of social settings.

When students have developed a list of several purposes for discussion, ask them to brainstorm lists of adjectives that describe discussions with each kind of purpose. For example, a discussion aimed at winning might be described as argumentative, hostile, or heated.

Tell students that they will be participating in a unit on immigration; this unit will involve a great deal of discussion. The primary purpose of these discussions will be clarifying and better understanding positions on various issues. The aim will be to conduct discussions that could be described using such adjectives as reasoned, informed, and enjoyable! As students participate in the unit, they will provide feedback and support to each other in the skills of discussion.

(If you have not already done so in the course of using another Public Issues unit, you may wish to introduce the four characteristics of a disciplined discussion – sensitivity to others, stating issues, setting an agenda, making clear transitions. Materials that can be used to introduce these characteristics are available in the series teacher's guide.)

Introducing the Unit. Assign students to read pages 3-5 of the unit. Divide the class into three groups, assigning each group responsibility for one type of issue covered on page 5. Tell students that each of them will be responsible for teaching what they have learned to two other students. Give each group the worksheet on their type of issue and allow time for group discussion and practice. Be sure you have studied the worksheets and can answer student questions.

Form new groups comprised of one student from each of the original three groups and allow time for sharing. For discussions during the remainder of the unit, you may wish to combine two groups of three to gain more diverse views in the discussion.

(You may, if you wish, distribute the double-entry learning log sheets provided in the series teacher's guide for use throughout the unit.)

The Immigrant Experience. The section, "Going to America: A Matter of Change and Choice," focuses on reasons for migrating in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The section stresses the idea that people made active decisions both whether to migrate and where to migrate. Before students begin reading, ask them to list some of the reasons they think immigrants currently decide to come to the United States; both political and economic reasons should be mentioned. You can then indicate that these categories of reasons have been found throughout U.S. history. You might also mention that within the subset of those who came for economic reasons are those who came intending to stay and those who came to make money to take back home. Students should keep these differences in mind as they read the selections in this section.

As students read the selections, allow time for groups to discuss the "Questions for Conversations" after each selection.

The "Persisting Questions of History" at the end of the section deal primarily with issues of fact-explanation and issues of definition. Remind students to identify which kinds of issues they are discussing and to use the strategies they have learned. The final question presents a very brief analogy as a means of testing the thesis that immigrants are not passive, but active decision-makers. Students may need to do additional research to answer the question adequately. The article from which the brief quotation was taken originally appeared in the *Miami Herald Magazine* on May 5, 1985. It is also included in the Social Issues Resource Series (*Human Rights*, Volume 2), which may be available in your school library. This question might also provide an opportunity for discussing why black Americans are different than groups discussed in this unit (i.e., they had no choice, made no decision).

Before beginning the next section, point out to students that once immigrants reached the United States, they faced more decisions, such as where in the United States to settle and what kind of work to seek. You may wish to share the following informa-

tion with them. It was written by geographer Cyrus Adams in 1896:

> If anyone were to study statistics relating to the ten or more million persons of foreign birth who are scattered so unevenly over our country... Why, he would inquire, do nearly four-fifths of all the Welsh in the United States live in Pennsylvania? Why have two-thirds of the Portuguese incomers gone to California...? Why do three-fifths of the 3,500 Hungarians in Ohio live in the city of Cleveland? Why are there over 8,000 Italians in Illinois and less than 500 in Indiana, and, in general, why do immigrants crowd Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota and give Indiana the go-by? There are scores of such questions that are very interesting because they have to do with the motives and influences which determine the abiding places among us [of the immigrants].
>
> If any of us thought we might better our chances in life in some foreign land we should prefer, other things being equal, some country where the climatic conditions and the geographic environment are not in extreme contrast with those to which we have been accustomed at home.... All except a few thousands of the million Canadians among us occupy a wide strip along our northern border.... More than half of the thousands of Cubans among us still live within a few hours' sail of their native island. Nearly 80,000 Mexicans have made their homes on our side of the line, but scarcely a thousand of them are found far from the border....
>
> The larger part of the foreign element, excepting the Irish, who were mostly agricultural laborers at home, are likely to follow their accustomed vocations here and they go to the regions where they may best procure employment in their chosen lines.... This is why two-thirds, or about 10,000, of our Portuguese neighbors live in California, for they are skilled in vine culture and wine making...and they are ten times as numerous in a few of the coast towns of Massachusetts as in the state of New York because they are also skilled fishermen and many of them find employment with the fishing fleets.
>
> Once there was a great strike among the thousands of employees of the rolling mills in Cleveland. The employers lost no time in bringing from Hungary, Bohemia, and Poland a sufficient number of trained rolling-mill hands to take the places of the strikers.... There they are today, and these facts explain why nine-tenths of the Bohemians, three-fifths of the Hungarians, and one-half of the Poles in the state of Ohio live in the city of Cleveland. If a foreigner has been a miner or an ironworker at home, he almost invariably follows the same calling when he comes here. This is chiefly the reason why nearly one-half of all the Hungarians in the United States live in Pennsylvania and why four out of five Welshmen who come to this country go to the same states...where there are coal or iron industries...
>
> ...Our Irish friends have really not seen very much of the land of their adoption. Most of them at home, men and women, were tillers of the soil, but here they much prefer the towns and cities, particularly those of the North Atlantic States...two-thirds of the Irish in this country live in New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania...
>
> What a contrast the Germans present! While two-thirds of the Irish have lingered near our Northeastern seaboard, more than two-thirds of the Germans have gone inland...[and] the north Central Region, particularly Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin is their stronghold.

Next, assign students to read "The Job." Because of the length of the selections, you may want to use a jigsaw strategy, with two students from each six-person group reading each selection and reporting on it to the group. For the selections for which they are responsible, students might review the facts of the case and present their views on the associated "Questions for Conversation." Be sure students talk about the information on living conditions they were able to gather from the selections.

The "Persisting Questions of History" concluding this section focus on three issues: how the reliability of historical sources can be evaluated, analyzing arguments made regarding the impact of immigrants on native-born workers, and determining who is responsible for working conditions experienced by immigrants. If you wish to expand on the notion of social responsibility, you might present students with this analogy:

There is a great deal of complaining in Middletown High School because of the tremendous amount of homework. Even the able students say that they often study five or six hours a night and don't get a good night's sleep. Students who go out for a sport or who become involved in clubs

have given up the idea of getting good grades or else feel constantly pressured. Students complain to the teachers, who reply that it is school policy for students to cover five subjects thoroughly.

The principal argues that the guidance department infoms him that this work is necessary to meet the competition for admission to good colleges.

Some parents complain that their youngsters are not getting enough sleep, to say nothing of relaxation and recreation. Some parents, however, are concerned that their sons or daughters get into the "best" colleges and constantly put pressure on the Board of Education to "keep standards high."

Who is responsible for the problem of student pressure and overwork at Middleton High School—the principal? the teachers? the colleges? the parents? the students themselves? the Board of Education? How, if at all, does this analogy help us clarify our thinking about responsibility and immigration?

The selection entitled "The Children of the Immigrants" deals with individual choices related to maintaining cultural identity while attempting to prosper in the general social setting. In reading the selection, students might take notes on the cultural differences John Nichols observed between his family and "American" families. They should also pay close attention to how Nichols felt about other people in his life—particularly his father and his wife. How do the conflicting emotions he felt about these key people reflect the larger conflict between pluralism and national identity? The first question in the "Persisting Questions of History" will give students an opportunity to use this information to discuss their own views of Nichols' decision to change his name. You might also discuss with students why it was so difficult for John and his brothers and sister to talk about the issue of changing their name. Were they dealing with definitional, fact/explanation, or ethical/value issues? Which factors were most difficult for them to examine?

To expand upon this exercise, have students write simulated first-person statements, one describing the views of a second-generation immigrant who wants to hide the fact of his/her "foreignness" and one describing the views of a person proud of his/her cultural/ethnic distinctiveness. If necessary, provide students with sentences to begin the statements (e.g., "I try to pretend that my father and mother are not foreigners" or "I am very proud that my father is an Italian immigrant").

The last question in this section involves the notion that third-generation Americans revive ethnic/cultural pride. The question requires that students gather evidence from immigrants in your community. As they do so, they might also gather information on the range of customs and tastes represented in your community. For example, they might ask such questions as: What is your favorite food? What holidays are most important to you? What do you consider your nationality? Would you prefer to live in a neighborhood with people of many ethnic backgrounds or people with ethnic backgrounds similar to your own? The data students gather can be used as the basis of discussions on many of the issues raised in this unit.

Immigration Restrictions. Most of the information in the previous section came from a period in which immigration was largely unrestricted. In this section, students are acquainted with restrictions that began to be placed on immigration in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The first selection, "Immigration Policy to 1924," provides a brief overview of policy development in this period. If you cover this material through your text or other materials, this selection could be skipped or used as a review.

"The Case of Joseph Revesz" deals with the effects of the quota system on individuals and their families. Allow time for students to read the selection and discuss the associated questions in their groups. If appropriate for your particular class, the materials in this section could be presented through a dramatization.

"Race, Nationality, and Worth" examines the debate over the literacy bill; the issues raised in this debate were also used in other debates regarding immigration restrictions. In reading and discussing the materials, students can not only gain understanding of the historical issues but can also analyze how the participants in the debate supported their positions. The first "Persisting Question of History" following this section is designed to guide students in this analysis.

The remaining "Persisting Questions of History" at the end of this section focus on the development of criteria for determining who can immigrate. These questions are sure to provoke considerable debate, and students may need to be reminded to stop and assess where their discussion is going periodically.

Today's Issues. Once again, the first reading in this section provides an overview of policy development (this time from 1924 to 1988) that can be omitted if you cover this material through your text or other resources. The first "Persisting Question of History" at the end of this section focuses on factors to be considered in developing immigration policy for the future. If time permits, you might set up a mock congressional committee hearing on im-

migration policy for the 21st century. As part of their discussion of this question, you could assign students roles as members of Congress and advocates of various positions. The material provided in the "Analogy Cases" section could be used by students in preparing their position statements. The hearing could then be conducted as a culminating activity for the unit.

The second "Persisting Question of History" in this section asks students to write brief answers to the central issues of this unit based on their reading and discussion to date. You might suggest that students consider how conditions in their community or state affect their views on these questions. Would their views be different if they lived in another region of the country?

The "Analogy Cases" section presents three sets of quotations, each presenting one quotation from the 1920s and one from the 1980s. The quotations focus on two issues that have been dealt with several times throughout the unit—the impact of immigration on employment of native-born Americans and the nature of our identity as a nation. You may wish to stimulate discussion of individual quotations before moving on to a general discussion. For example, you might ask which view of the economic effects of immigration appears to be supported by the facts students have. Why is it so difficult to identify exactly how immigration affects jobs and the economy? Students might also discuss whether they, like Morgan, believe that a national language is essential to the maintenance of a united America. Can immigrants and their children maintain their language/heritage and fit into the American culture?

Have students focus on the first "Persisting Question of History," which asks them to place each of the people quoted in this section on two continua reflecting varying views of national identity. Students are then to place themselves on the continua. Encourage discussion of students' own placement.

The final "Persisting Question" asks students to consider, given what they have read, whether consensus on the critical issues of this unit is possible and why reaching agreement is so difficult. Do such persisting disagreements themselves reflect the diversity of our population?

Review, Reflection, and Research. These exercises include writing, research, and discussion. You may assign them selectively for completion by individual students or small groups, or they can be used as topics for large-group discussion and reflection on the unit.

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Student Name_____

ETHICAL OR VALUE ISSUES

Ethical statements or value judgments suggest that some object, person, or conduct is "good" or "bad" based on some general ethical principle. For example, the statement "America should be a refuge for the oppressed" (a policy statement) may be based on the principle that "It is morally wrong to refuse entry to people who are mistreated in their home countries."

It is important for a participant in discussion of public issues to recognize such value statements. It is equally important to understand how value statements can be challenged or supported. Here are several strategies for doing so:

1. Use of value-laden language. Ethical or value statements can normally be phrased with "loaded" words that provoke strong personal feelings. Terms such as *oppressed*, *haven*, and *American way* tend to arouse positive or negative feelings. The use of value-laden terms is a shorthand way of reminding people that they have important value commitments.

2. Use of a respected or venerable source. Value statements may be justified by showing that they are supported by a source that most people consider sacred, respected, or venerable: the Bible, the Constitution, or the words of a highly respected figure. For example, the statement "Immigrants should not be discriminated against because they have not adopted 'American' ways" might be supported by reference to the Declaration of Independence ("all men are created equal, that they are endowed...with certain unalienable rights").

3. Prediction of a valued consequence. Policy positions and value judgments are often used together to show that support of a particular policy will lead to a good end. When a policy position is linked to valued consequences, there is the additional problem of showing that the valued consequence will, in fact, occur. Thus, discussants must resolve an ethical-value issue (which consequences are good?), as well as an issue of fact (which consequences will actually occur?).

4. Finding important values that conflict. Policy positions are commonly supported by value statements. This often does not settle the issue, however, because in most public controversies, we find ethical principles that conflict. For example, in debating whether immigration should be restricted, discussants may hold the following conflicting values:

- It is wrong to allow people to suffer in other countries of the world.
- It is wrong to let immigrants have jobs when Americans are out of work.

Where there are two conflicting values in a discussion, one must be violated regardless of which policy stand is taken. One effective way to point this out is through the use of an analogy – a situation similar to the situation being discussed. For example, in discussing whether an immigrant was right to change his name in order to get a job, a participant might use this analogy:

> Suppose you were applying for a job and you knew it would help to say you had finished high school, but actually you dropped out. Would you tell the employer you graduated?

This analogy forces the discussant to recognize the conflicting values – getting ahead and honesty. By drawing distinctions between the analogies, participants can clarify their thinking about each situation. For example, another discussant might respond to the analogy above by saying:

> That's different because the job may require skills or knowledge you would only have if you had graduated from high school. The immigrant who changed his name had the skills needed for the job. It was just prejudice that kept him from getting a job before he changed his name. He wouldn't have been "dishonest" if he had been treated fairly.

Assignment:

Read the quotation below. Identify the ethical or value principle it is based on. Then think of ways in which you could support or challenge this principle with each of these strategies: (1) using value-laden language, (2) citing a respected source, (3) showing valued consequences, and (4) using an analogy.

> I am very proud that my father is an Italian immigrant. I have something unique to contribute to America and am much more fortunate that those who have "typical" old American backgrounds.

Student Name _____

DEFINITIONAL ISSUES

Definitional issues revolve around the way important words or phrases are used in a discussion. For example, two people might disagree on whether a group was "oppressed." One person might say "oppressed" means having no political freedoms, while another person holds that "oppressed" means in a degrading situation due to someone else's actions (e.g., without a job because of governmental policies).

Some definitional disputes are only labeling problems. There is no disagreement over the nature of the thing being labeled, but over the appropriate label. For example, in different parts of the country, flavored carbonated water may be called "tonic," "soda," or "pop." The nature of the item remains the same, regardless of the name assigned to it.

More common and more difficult to resolve are definitional disputes in which people disagree over the nature or quality of an action being named. For example, a key question in this unit is the meaning of "American."

One of the major problems in the process of definition is the need to arrive at enough precise criteria – standards – to identify the term under discussion. Thus, resolving definitional disputes involves a two-step process:

- Selecting general criteria for a definition.
- Deciding which examples fit the criteria.

Two strategies can move discussion along by helping reach agreement on definitions:

1. Stipulation. People can simply agree to use a word consistently in a specific way. ("Whenever we use the term *responsible*, it means consciously causing an event to occur.")

2. Use of an authoritative source. Discussants can use a dictionary or other authoritative source to find support for the particular use of a word or phrase. This technique is most helpful with definitional disputes that involve labeling problems.

Assignment:

Read the story below. In your group, decide whether the Korean couple in the story was discriminated against. Remember to establish criteria for defining "discrimination" and then use the criteria to determine whether this example fits the definition.

> A Korean couple worked sixteen hours a day for two years and accumulated some savings. Their dream was simple: they wanted to have their own business rather than work for someone else.
>
> One day, a church member approached and asked them whether they wanted to buy a fruit and vegetable store. He added that the business of the store was very good but that the store owner had to sell the store because of a lack of hands.
>
> When the couple heard this offer, they were very excited. The couple loitered around the store for two weeks, watching the customers in order to determine the volume of transactions. Then they decided to buy the store for $20,000 in "key money" because the store had always been crowded with so many customers.
>
> Two or three weeks after they took over the store, they realized they had been swindled. The once-teeming customers suddenly disappeared. The former owner had cut his retail prices in half while the couple watched the store.

Student Name _____

FACT/EXPLANATION ISSUES

Factual issues are disagreements about the descriptions or explanations of events. People make factual claims to say what the world is like, was, or will be.

There are many kinds of factual claims. "The Fong family immigrated last month" is a fairly specific claim about an event that occurred over a short period of time. "Immigration increased rapidly in the late 1800s and early 1900s" summarizes a very large number of events that occurred over several years. "The United States will develop more restrictive immigration policies over the next 40 years" is a prediction involving a large number of events over a period of years. "Koreans immigrate from their country because they do not support the actions of the Korean government" is not only a summary of a large number of events, but also an explanation of why certain events occur.

Factual claims can be supported in a number of ways:

1. Appealing to "common knowledge" or "common sense." "Common knowledge" or "common sense" is a somewhat weak source of evidence, since it suggests no additional process by which to revolve the disagreement. If two people shout at each other that their "common sense" supports contradictory claims, what they believe to be true is obviously not so common.

2. Citing personal observations. Personal observation is usually a good source of evidence, but is of somewhat limited use in the study of public issues, since few of us have the opportunity to actually witness historical events. For this reason, we rely heavily on the reports of others, in hopes that they can provide reliable information.

3. Reference to an authoritative source. This is the most familiar kind of evidence in controversies over factual issues in history and current events. When referring to an authoritative source, however, we must always inquire into the quality of the authority. Is the authority really an expert? How much training and experience has he/she had in the field? Is there information about the authority indicating that he/she has a personal bias on the topic? Do different authorities themselves make contradictory claims, or do authorities support one another?

Some standards of authority are often uncritically accepted when they should be continually questioned. Some young people, for example, may believe that being an adult makes an alleged authority more reliable. Adults are usually happy to reinforce this notion. While adults may have more authority than young people in the sense of privileges and rights, this should not be confused with the assumption that an adult knows more about any particular subject simply because he or she is an adult.

Another standard of authority about which we should be critical is the fact that a claim has occurred in print or has been aired over radio or television. Black print on white paper seems to cast a magic spell of truth. It is, however, almost as easy to make false claims on paper as it is by word of mouth.

Assignment:

Below is a series of factual claims. Describe the process you would go through in testing these claims:

1. The number of immigrants from Korea to the United States has decreased in the past five years.

2. A majority of immigrants take low-paying jobs that Americans would not want.

3. Most Americans believe that our nation should be a "refuge for the oppressed."

4. Hispanic immigrants do not become assimilated as fast as immigrants from Africa because they are in closer contact with people in their home countries.

As an example, the claim, "winters are getting colder," might be tested through the following reasoning:

a. Define the key word "winter" more clearly. By winter, I mean the months of January and February in the Northern Hemisphere.

b. Describe the sample of temperatures taken. I will use the three major cities in the United States – New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles – and compare the mean low temperatures of the two winter months.

c. Tell what period of time will be sampled. Every five years between 1950 and 1985.

d. Describe the source of evidence. A world almanac.

Now consider the steps you would go through in testing the claims above. (Caution: Don't become sidetracked in an effort to "prove" the claims. Focus on the process of defining the claims in sufficiently precise terms so that they may be handled as factual questions and on the type of evidence that might be used to support such claims.)